



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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## THESIS

**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON  
TERRORISM, 2001–2010**

by

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December 2010

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**AN ASSESSMENT OF THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM, 2001–2010**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
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## **ABSTRACT**

There is no doubt that the 9/11 attacks constituted a new terrorism phenomena in terms of sophistication and scale of mayhem. U.S. policy makers had to consider at least three approaches in response to these attacks: the criminology or soft power approach, the war approach, and the root-causes and the battle of ideas approach. The U.S. pursued a total war on terrorism approach not only against al-Qaeda, but also against all other terrorists in world. The war approach that utilized the might of the American military against non-state actors has resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives; millions have been injured and displaced as well. Yet, despite the war approach, al-Qaeda is still posing a great threat to the United States and its allies. Additionally, the rate of its attacks against American targets is ever-increasing. These facts force us to reexamine the effectiveness of the war approach nine years after its commencement.

This research examines the effectiveness of the war approach using metrics other than body count. It looks at the effect of the war on al-Qaeda's organizational structure. Its major finding is that the war on terrorism has forced al-Qaeda to transform its organizational structures to al-Qaeda's advantage. The war helped al-Qaeda's organization to expand horizontally, creating new organizational mergers and affiliates, as well as making room for radicalizing aspiring jihadists. The organization has changed from a mere terrorist network to a radical social movement with an ideology and a brand name that has presence in more than 70 countries. Two new strategies are necessary to fight al-Qaeda effectively. First, the U.S. needs to distinguish between al-Qaeda and all other types of Islamist activism. The war approach should be limited strictly to fighting al-Qaeda alone. Second, the U.S. could benefit from adopting a "hybrid" approach where national and international legal cooperation is combined with a root causes and soft-power approach to separate al-Qaeda from its potential supporters.

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# **I. INTRODUCTION**

## **A. RESEARCH QUESTION**

Nine days after the horrific 9/11 attacks, the U.S. administration officially declared a war on terrorism. President George W. Bush articulated its main objective during a speech to the U.S. Congress: “The war on terror begins with al Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped and defeated.”<sup>1</sup> Nine years later, it is important to examine the effectiveness of the approach taken by the U.S. administration to combat anti-American terrorism. Has the war on terrorism achieved its declared objectives? If it has fallen short, what explains its limitations and failures? To quote former Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, “Are we winning or losing the global war on terror?”<sup>2</sup>

There is no doubt that many things have changed in response to the 9/11 attacks. These changes have affected individuals, organizations, and states. For individuals, the war on terrorism has curtailed some fundamental liberties and may have infringed on people’s privacy. Monitoring phone calls, enacting tighter border security procedures, and increasing profiling practices, both official and unofficial, have had negative effects on individual freedoms. More importantly, many people have lost their lives and been displaced as a consequence of the war on terrorism. The organizational level has witnessed the birth of new security institutions, new counterterrorism policies, and the emergence of new terrorist entities. Assessing the total positive and negative impacts of this war must take into account all of these developments. At the state level, there have been regimes change by force as a direct response to the 9/11 attacks, including the removal of the Taliban in Afghanistan and the Baathist state in Iraq. Terrorists have targeted some countries, such as the United Kingdom, Spain, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia,

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<sup>1</sup> CNN.Com, "Transcript of President Bush's Address - September 21, 2001," <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/> (accessed Jun 11, 2010).

<sup>2</sup> USATODAY.Com, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/washington/executive/rumsfeld-memo.htm> (accessed Jun 11, 2010).

for their support of the global war on terrorism. How one accounts for the impact of the global war on terrorism on states allied with U.S. is an important part of assessing the successes and failures of this war.

From the first days of the war on terrorism until now, the official measurements of the progress of the war on terrorism lay in numbers and buddy-count metrics. Therefore, many cite neutralizing two-third of al-Qaeda operatives either by killing or capturing; freezing \$ 200 million of al-Qaeda financial assets, and denying al-Qaeda their two main safe heavens (Afghanistan and Iraq) as an indication of success that proves the effectiveness of the war approach. This research examines the effectiveness of the war on terrorism differently. It examines it in terms of utilizing military forces, through a different set of metrics: the “organizational structure metrics”. Accordingly, the research core question answered in this thesis is how does the war approach affect the organizational structure of al-Qaeda? Is the war on terrorism destroying al-Qaeda, or is it rebuilding it in different shape? Central to this inquiry is a study of the history of al-Qaeda in terms of its establishment dynamics, goal evolution, organizational structure, and relations with other terrorist organizations, especially those who merged under its banner post-9/11.

## **B. IMPORTANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

Nine years after declaring the global war on terrorism, which commenced with the invasion of Afghanistan, it is important to evaluate the progress of the U.S. and its allies. Any extended war, with an uncertain end, against an unidentified enemy has significant negative implications from security, economic, and social perspectives. National security services are now contending with countless asymmetric threats that have bloomed dramatically in the last decade. Economic costs are mounting and consuming valuable resources. Tensions with the Muslim world have increased and intensified the feeling of a civilizational clash between Muslims and the Western world. Understanding our progress in fighting terrorism may offer us an opportunity to choose alternative policies that can more effectively minimize the threat of terrorism while reducing its financial, political, and—above all else—the human costs.

The threat level currently encountered by our free societies, which is obviously greater than the prewar on terrorism era, forced us to restructure our understanding of how to measure the progress of fighting terrorism and to evaluate both the effectiveness and implications of the war approach. Buddy-count metrics are paradoxical with the reality that suggests al-Qaeda is imposing an imminent and greater threat to the United States and its allies than before 9/11.<sup>3</sup> Some may ask the legitimate question; how can they still pose such a threat? Haven't we neutralized two-third of al-Qaeda, frozen most of its financial assets, and cleared their major bases? The simple answer is that the U.S. is using the wrong metrics of measurement. The organizational structure metrics in this research will eliminate this paradox, answer the above question, most importantly, question the effectiveness of the war approach.

### **C. MAIN HYPOTHESES**

This thesis examines the following hypothesis: the war approach was and is not the appropriate tool to eliminate terrorism, because it does not promise to solve the problem of terrorism. To the contrary, the war on terrorism has helped increase al-Qaeda's organizational structure horizontally, as the present organization encompasses mergers, affiliates, aspirants, and radicalized individuals. The organization has diffused into groups and cells that operate in more than 70 countries around the world. It is no longer an isolated and vertically structured organization.

The war on terrorism has not weakened the structure of al-Qaeda. Instead it has allowed it to become a more sophisticated and resilient organization. Al-Qaeda, like most other terrorist organizations, upon its establishment kept on the classical organizational structure. It was a top-down hierarchical organization, and Bin Laden was in control at the top. However, since 9/11, Bin Laden has become more of a symbolic figure to the organization and less of a controller. As a direct response to the war approach, the structure of this organization flipped and became a bottom-up movement, where members are voluntarily defending the ideas behind al-Qaeda, but not al-Qaeda itself.

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<sup>3</sup> John Rollins, "Al Qaeda and Affiliates: Historical Perspective, Global Presence, and Implications for US Policy," *Congressional research services*, February, 2010, 1.  
<http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/R41070.pdf> (accessed October 19, 2010).

Therefore, the killing or capturing of al-Qaeda operatives is not necessarily a good indication of the effectiveness of the war on terrorism. A matrix that analyzes al-Qaeda's organizational structure before and after 9/11 is a far better measure than the "numbers metrics".

An additional argument of this thesis is that there are no clear signs that United States is moving in the right direction in their fight against terrorism. The war unified the jihadists to fight the far enemy instead of the apostate regimes in their respective countries. Additionally, many perceive the war on terrorism as an unjustified war against Muslim countries. Al-Qaeda has exploited this perception to recruit thousands of Muslim youth and win the sympathy of Muslim public.

#### **D. METHODOLOGY**

This study will use qualitative analysis to assess the effectiveness of utilizing military forces in a total war against terrorism. Through a cross-time comparison, it will analyze the evolution of the al-Qaeda organization, over the last nine years, by looking at its goals, capabilities and relationships and ties with other active terrorists groups in the Islamic world. The research will also answer the following questions: How did Al-Qaida and other groups emerge? When have they succeeded and when have they failed? What was the nature of relations between the jihadists in the Islamic World? How did other jihadist groups perceive Bin Laden's ideologies before 9/11? Finally, what changes has the war on terrorism affected on the organizational structure of al-Qaeda? The research will consult literature in English and in Arabic to understand how Arab writers perceive the present problem of al-Qaeda and terrorism. The thesis will focus on analyzing data and documents that recall events, testimonies, and opinions of al-Qaeda veterans, prisoners and eye- witnesses.

The research also will examine the number of incidents that have taken place before and after September 11 2001, with a focus on al-Qaeda. Specifically, it will track the rate of increase in violence from 1992, when Osama Bin Laden began to criticize the

United States, to 2001 (or period I), and then from 2001 to 2010 (period II). This analysis will use data from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) run by the University of Maryland consortium for the study of terrorism.

The thesis also will examine the number of terrorist organizations that have publicly associated themselves with al-Qaeda before and after the United States waged wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. It will analyze three types of al-Qaeda associations: mergers, affiliations, and aspirants. Mergers with al-Qaeda signal the highest commitment to the terrorist network and are best represented by al-Qaeda's merger in 2004 with the Iraq-based Jama'at al-Tawhid wa-al Jihad led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, under the name of Qa'idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn. Another example is the merger between the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC) and al-Qaeda in 2006, under the name Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). Affiliating with al-Qaeda is the second-highest form of association. Groups like Al Ittihad Al Islami in Somalia, Jemaah Islamiyah in Indonesia, and the Abu Sayyaf group in the Philippines are al-Qaeda affiliates that have not officially merged with the group. Al-Qaeda aspirants are the weakest associates of the al-Qaeda network, but they represent a phenomenon that measures the appeal of the al-Qaeda brand. Examples of this third category include homegrown cells in the U.S. and Fatah al-Islam in Lebanon.

## **E. LITERATURE REVIEW**

The period following the 9/11 attack witnessed a major jump of interest in studying terrorism. According to Andrew Silke, who heads the program in terrorism studies at the University of East London, "if current trends continue, more than 90% of the terrorism studies literature will have been written post-9/11."<sup>4</sup> Silke observes, "[A] new book on terrorism is published every six hours in the English language."<sup>5</sup> After the

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<sup>4</sup> Quoted in Jessica Shepherd, "Education: Academic Interest: The Rise and Rise of Terrorism Studies," *The Guardian (London) - Final Edition*, sec. Guardian Education Pages, July 3, 2007, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2007/jul/03/highereducation.research> (accessed Jun 14, 2010).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

horrific attack on United States homeland and even before the administration identified the perpetrators, the question of how the United States would respond dominated the world sphere.

There are three categories of literature that focus on a state response to terrorism and which policy might be the most effective to eliminate it: the criminology approach, the war approach, and the root-causes approach. The three approaches are not fully distinctive, and they do interact with each other in most cases. However, writers obviously focus on a main approach that might find support from another.

### **1. The Criminology and Soft Power Approach**

Proponents of this approach insist mainly on three things. First, Bruce Schneier argues that states should not make significant changes in response to rare terrorist events.<sup>6</sup> Second, the United States should not consider the attack “an act of war,” hence America should have avoided a military response to the 9/11 attack. Third, perpetrators should be criminalized by the U.S. administration in accordance with the international law.

Several officials in the field of counterterrorism suggest that waging a “war” using all means of military force is an inappropriate response. Sir Ken Macdonald, the Director of Public Prosecutions, argues that “Those responsible for atrocities like the July 7 bombings in London were not ‘soldiers’ in a war, but ‘deluded’, narcissistic... who should be dealt with by the criminal justice system.”<sup>7</sup> He also notes, “The criminal justice response to terrorism must be ‘proportionate and grounded in due process and the rule of law.’”<sup>8</sup> In addition, “We must protect ourselves from these atrocious crimes without abandoning our traditions of freedom.”<sup>9</sup> Ariel Merari also supports this view is and

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<sup>6</sup> Bruce Schneier, *Beyond Fear: Thinking Sensibly about Security in an Uncertain World* (New York: Copernicus Books, 2003), 11.

<sup>7</sup> Lucy Bannerman, "There is no War on Terror in the UK, Says DPP," *The Times*, sec. business, January 24, 2007, <http://business.timesonline.co.uk/tol/business/law/article1295756.ece> (accessed Jun 14, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

argues, "Terrorist activity by groups or individuals based within the country against which they operate is a criminal matter that can and should be handled by the legal system of that country."<sup>10</sup>

Wybo Heere explains the legality of the war on terrorism. Through his extensive research in international law as it relates to international terrorism he concludes:

The main treaties relating to the conduct of international armed conflict are formally and fully applicable to counter-terrorist military operation only when those operations have an inter-state character. Where counter-terrorist operations are simply part of a civil war, the parties must apply, as a minimum, the rules applicable to civil wars. Where operations are simply part of a state's policing, and not part of an armed conflict such as to bring the laws of war into play, the laws of war are not formally in force.... The attempt can and should nevertheless be made to apply the law to the maximum extent possible.<sup>11</sup>

Others, like Michel Chossudovsky, who is an anti-war activist and economic specialist, delegitimize the war on terrorism and argue that it is part of a preplanned "military-road map driven by economic agendas, opening up of new economic frontiers and the remolding of national economies. The powers of Wall Street, the Anglo-American oil giants and the U.S.-U.K. defense contractors are indelibly behind this process."<sup>12</sup> He also argues that, in order to achieve this agenda, the Bush administration twisted and manipulated the truth through a massive media propaganda campaign to build a consensus ratified by the judicial branch and galvanize American citizens to support the war and legitimize changes.<sup>13</sup>

Although using military force may have a positive impact on mitigating terrorist threats in the short-term, it can lead to a clash between Muslims and the west in long run. Saighal Vinod points this out in his book *Dealing with Global Terrorism: the Way*

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<sup>10</sup> Ariel Merari, "Deterring Fear: Government Responses to Terrorist Attacks," *All Business*, January 1 2002, 1, [http://www.allbusiness.com/buying\\_exiting\\_businesses/3580584-1.html](http://www.allbusiness.com/buying_exiting_businesses/3580584-1.html) (accessed Jun 14, 2010).

<sup>11</sup> Wybo P. Heere, ed., *Terrorism and the Military: International Legal Implications* (Netherlands: T.M.C. Asser, The Hague, 2003), 91.

<sup>12</sup> Michel Chossudovsky, "The Anglo-American War of Terror: An Overview," Global Research, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/index.php?aid=1576&context=va> (accessed Jun 14, 2010).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

*Forward* where he argues, “The American anger should have abated to a considerable extent.”<sup>14</sup> He also argues, “Concomitant with the efforts underfoot for coordination and streamlining the fight against global terrorism on an international basis, the limits to counter-terrorism have also to be appreciated by law makers, law enforcers and the public at large.”<sup>15</sup> Steve Hewitt answers the fundamental question, what is the appropriate state response to the violence? He argues, “There are short-term and long-term approaches to take. The short-term will invariably be dominated by laws, crackdowns and an emphasis on the role to be played by police forces and intelligence services. The long-term require greater government participation...then negotiations may be the path to follow.”<sup>16</sup>

## **2. The War Approach**

There is no doubt that the catastrophic event of 9/11 ignited the flames of hatred and anger that not only promoted the administration and decision makers to adopt policies that turned the world upside down, but also promoted writers, journalists, and media to beat the drums of war. Rudolph Giuliani, Mayor of New York, said to the United Nations General Assembly, 1 October 2001:

Look at that destruction, that massive, senseless, cruel loss of human life, then I ask you to look in your hearts and see there is no room for neutrality on the issue of terrorism. You're either with civilization or with terrorists.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Vinod Saighal, *Dealing with Global Terrorism: The Way Forward* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 2003), 8.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 218.

<sup>16</sup> Hewitt Steve., *the British War on Terrorism: Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism on the Home Front since 9/11* (London; New York: Continuum: Cromwell Press, Ltd., 2008), 119.

<sup>17</sup> EMediaMillWorks, "Giuliani at the United Nations," *Washington Post*, Oct. 1, 2001, [http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/giulianitext\\_100101.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/specials/attacked/transcripts/giulianitext_100101.html) (accessed Jun 15, 2010).

Even at the public level, the desire for revenge was obvious from President Bush's job approval. In September 21–22, 2001, the president got 90 percent voter approval for the way he was doing his job, while in August 24–26 of the following year, voter approval dropped to just 55 percent.<sup>18</sup>

Five days after the 9/11 attack, the U.S Congress overwhelmingly passed the use of force resolution, which gave the President of United States power to use military force and whatever means necessary to respond to the 9/11 attack. It also provided a \$40 billion emergency spending package.<sup>19</sup>

Journalists and news reporters played a vital role in promoting war the approach, especially those who wrote within the first month of the attack. According to Christopher Kelley and Maria Martinez, "A total of 95 articles [on the editorial page of *The Washington Post*] dealing specifically with the war on terrorism were written between 9/11/01 and 10/7/01, the day United States troops were committed to battle. Fifty-nine percent of those editorials (56/95) were written in a tone that was pro-war."<sup>20</sup> On the second day after the 9/11 tragedy, Charles Krauthammer advocated "war" as the right response to the attack and criticized those who called for the role of justice as a response saying: "This is not crime. This is war....Secretary of State Colin Powell's first reaction to the day of infamy was to pledge to 'Bring those responsible to justice.' This is exactly wrong."<sup>21</sup> Some commentators went beyond advocating "war," criticized the United Nations, and delegitimized its ability to facilitate cooperation under international law. Richard Salsman, who is an author of several economic books, argued. "It is not the US

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<sup>18</sup> CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll, "Do You Approve Or Disapprove of the Way George W. Bush is Handling His Job as President," *USA Today*, sec. news, May 20, 2005, <http://www.usatoday.com/news/polls/tables/live/01132003.htm> (accessed Jun15, 2010).

<sup>19</sup> CNN.com, "Congress Approves Resolution Authorizing Force," Cable News Network LP, LLLP, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/14/congress.terrorism/> (accessed Jun 15, 2010),.

<sup>20</sup> Maria Martinez and Christopher Kelley, "Hitting Camels in the Butt: War Rhetoric and Deliberation in the Aftermath of the September 11 Terrorist Attacks" *the American Political Science Association*, August 29-September 1, 2002, , <http://www.apsanet.org/~polcomm/APSA%20Papers/Kelley%20and%20Martinez.pdf> (accessed Jun 15, 2010).

<sup>21</sup> Charles Krauthammer, "to War, not to Court," *The Washington Post*, Sec. Columnists, September 12, 2001, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/ac2/wp-dyn?pagename=article&node=digest&contentId=A14320-2001Sep11> (accessed Jun 15, 2010).

war effort but its irrational appeasement effort that lacks moral legitimacy. The United Nations is an evil agency, which harbors terrorist nations and prevents good regimes from vanquishing evil ones. The United Nations' building should be emptied at once and filled with office space for rational business activity.”<sup>22</sup>

John Yoo, who worked in the Office of Legal Counsel of the Department of Justice from 2001 to 2003, exemplifies those who promoted the war approach and marginalized the role of law in confronting terrorism. Five years after leaving his official job in the Department of Justice and despite the fact that he had been a subject of criticism, he still argues that America is at war and that a criminal approach can't solve the problem. He claims it's because of the aggressive policies of the administration, al-Qaeda is no longer the threat it once was.<sup>23</sup> He says, “Bipartisan studies of the failings that led up to 9/11 refer to the inadequacy of the criminal justice approach to deal effectively with an ideologically motivated military organization like al-Qaeda. If 9/11 started a war...the United States can employ its war powers to kill enemy operatives and their leaders, detain them without trial until the end of the conflict.”<sup>24</sup>

Brigadier General Russell Howard (ret.) argues, “The Bush administration has no choice but to use the military force.”<sup>25</sup> According to Howard, “Westphalian rules don't apply when dealing with al-Qaeda and the normal means of influence are not applicable when dealing with them, as well.”<sup>26</sup>

Shortly after the 9/11 attack, it became clear that the United States was raising the notion of war against al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan. Soon, this notion led to

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<sup>22</sup> Richard Salsman, "US War on Iraq is Morally Legitimate," *Capitalism Magazine*, 20 March 2003, <http://www.capitalismmagazine.com/world/united-nations/2582-War-Iraq-Morally-Legitimate.html> (accessed Jun 15, 2010).

<sup>23</sup> John Yoo, *War by Other Means: an Insider's Account of the War on Terrorism*, (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 2006), 231–232.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>25</sup> Howard Russell, Reid Sawyer Howard Russell, ed., *Terrorism and Counterterrorism: Understanding the New Security Environment, Readings and Interpretations*, 2nd ed. ed. (Dubuque, Iowa: McGraw Hill Contemporary Learning Series, 2006), 433.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 433.

actions. On October 7, 2001, U.S. armed forces started a military operation against Afghanistan as a direct response to the 9/11 attack. Two years later, the U.S. invaded Iraq as part of its continuing global war on terrorism.

### **3. Root-Causes and the Battle of Ideas Approach**

In answering the fundamental question, “What can be done to eliminate terrorism and bring peace to nations?” or more specifically “How can we fight terrorism?” a third approach emerged that advocates policies that deal directly and effectively with the root-causes of terrorism. It concentrates on the ideological dimensions and ideas more than those that just focus on the construction and organizational ones. Byman Daniel argues, al-Qaeda is winning the battle of ideas so far. If we do nothing to counter al-Qaeda ideology, the movement will gain a steady stream of recruits, and will find refuge among sympathetic populations.<sup>27</sup>

Rohan Gunaratna argues that the overall result of the operational counterterrorism approach is modest, thus investment should go to the strategic counterterrorism approach based on soft-power responses: ideological, educational, financial, media, legislative, informatics, and developmental responses.<sup>28</sup> In general, proponents of this approach focus on investigating the root-causes that drive an individual or an organization to adopt violence against civilian targets. Upon identifying those causes, the United States or any affected state should work seriously to root out these cases by focusing more on long-term strategies. In the al-Qaeda case, which is the main subject of this thesis, the literature revolves around identifying the three main root-causes that created the group and helped it recruit more individuals.

The unsolved Palestinian issue and the biased American support for Israel at the expense of Palestinian rights constitutes the first and the most important cause that al-

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<sup>27</sup> Byman Daniel, *the Five Front War: The Better Way to Fight Global Jihad* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008), 45-46.

<sup>28</sup> Rohan Gunaratna, "Strategic Counterterrorism: The Way Forward," in *Terrorism: What's Coming the Mutating Threat*, ed. Ellis James (Oklahoma City: Memorial Institution for the Prevention of Terrorism, 2007), 64.

Qaeda has used in its recruitment poster. Byman argues that a withdrawal of U.S forces from the Gulf area and a fair policy toward the Palestinian-Israeli conflict could hinder al-Qaeda recruitment efforts.<sup>29</sup>

The second cause is the massive American military presence in the Middle East and the poorly justified invasion of Iraq. Sherifa Zuhur recommended that U.S strategy should carefully “consider the impact of [its] foreign policy in the [Middle East]. The Palestinian issue, [America’s] relationship with Israel, and [their] long-term [interest] in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to be used as evidence of [pervasive American hypocrisy].”<sup>30</sup>

The third cause ranges from the humiliation of to hate crimes against Muslims, and from the promotion of tyranny to undermine democratic transformation in some Muslim countries. Colonel Laurence Andrew Dobrot argues, “[US] foreign policy has created a credibility gap in the Middle East and globally, especially in Muslim populated countries. This gap has been created by the perceived hypocrisy of America’s words compared to its deeds. The U.S. government talks about promoting democratic principles, yet the Muslim countries in the Middle East with which the United States has positive relations are either monarchies or dictatorships.”<sup>31</sup> Hence, he argues that the U.S should re-establish credibility and promote democracy that the Islamic world understands and respects. To do so, “[it] must hold the Israelis, the Saudis, the Egyptians, and itself accountable to standards, and [it] must recognize democratically elected governments such as Hamas and actively engage them in public diplomacy, even if it disagrees with them.”<sup>32</sup>

Charles Hauss argues, “Force alone will not bring terrorism to an end. To do that, we need to use the tools which conflict resolution professionals have been developing

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<sup>29</sup> Byman Daniel, *the Five Front War: the Better way to Fight Global Jihad*, (Hoboken, New Jersey, John Wiley& Sons, Inc., 2008), 10.

<sup>30</sup> Sherifa Zuhur, *A Hundred Osamas: Islamist Threats and the Future of Counterinsurgency*, (US Army War College: Strategic Studies Institute, 2005), 60.

<sup>31</sup> Laurence Dobrot, *the Global War on Terrorism: A Religious War?* (Pennsylvania: US Army War College, [2007]), <http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pubs/display.cfm?pubID=822> (accessed Jun 15, 2010). 8.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

during the last generation or so and address the root cause of terrorism: empathic listening, reframing, dialogue, analytical problem solving, coalition-building, among others.”<sup>33</sup> Howard Zinn argues, “The continued expenditure of more than \$300 billion for the military every year has absolutely no effect on the danger of terrorism. If we want security, we will have to change our posture in the world—to stop being an intervention military power and to stop dominating the economies of other countries.”<sup>34</sup>

## **F. OVERVIEW**

This research will examine the effect of the global war on terrorism on al-Qaeda since its declaration nine years ago. The thesis is organized into five chapters. The first chapter will present the main research question, methodology, and a brief review of related literature. The second chapter will focus on analyzing the history of al-Qaeda and other contemporary organizations. This will include the establishment phase of al-Qaeda, and other violent groups currently in the Muslim Arab world, their goals, and the nature of their relations before the 9/11 era.

The third chapter will describe the failure of the jihadists’ efforts to achieve their objectives at local levels. The importance of this chapter is to shed light on why these organizations failed at the local level. Hence, counterterrorism strategy should focus on how to bring these organizations back to the stage where recruitment was limited to radicals and where a Muslim public perceived the groups’ actions as an act of terror. In addition, the third chapter will examine the ideological and structural evolution of al-Qaeda after the mid-1990s (the consolidation phase). Additionally, the research will focus on how other jihadist groups perceived Bin Laden’s escalations, especially after al-Qaeda’s consolidation. The U.S. could have exploited other jihadists’ opposition to Bin Laden’s projects after 1998, if their policy differentiated between al-Qaeda and Others.

The fourth chapter will examine how the war on terrorism is serving Bin Laden more than hurting him. Failure to understand the difference between al-Qaeda and those

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<sup>33</sup> Charles Hauss, "Terrorism," *Beyond Intractability.org*, <http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/terrorism/> (accessed Jun 15, 2010).

<sup>34</sup> Anthony Arnove, ed., *Terrorism and War: Howard Zinn*, A Seven Stories Press 1st ed. (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2002), 9.

who are “not al-Qaeda” contributed to the fusion of “not al-Qaeda” into al-Qaeda. Additionally, Chapter IV will discuss the al-Qaeda’s new organizational structure and analyze its mergers, affiliates, and aspirants. Moreover, in this chapter will discuss how the world in general and Muslims in particular perceive the war on terrorism, and how this perception facilitates terrorist recruitment and fails to delegitimize al-Qaeda narrations. The final chapter will summarize the research findings and offer some recommendations to enhance our efforts to fight terrorism.

## **II. THE AFGHAN WAR AND THE BIRTH OF AL QAEDA**

### **A. JIHADISM BEFORE AL QAEDA**

It is a simple fact that current events are associated with the past dynamics, hence understanding the past contributes to a better understanding of the current situation and consequently affects our way of mapping the future. With that in mind, the present al-Qaeda threat is a product of dynamics from the late 1960s and 1970s in the Muslim world. The present jihadist movement did not emerge unexpectedly. It is actually a continuation of events often called the third wave of the Islamic movements. This wave emerged as a response to the failure of the nationalism project to free the holy lands of Palestine from the Israeli occupation. The 1967 Arab war with Israel disappointed the Islamic publics in general and Arabs in particular. Instead of freeing Palestine, Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, they had lost Sinai, the west bank, and Golan respectively. The war produced a sense of national and Islamic anger that surfaced during Sadat's tenure. Sadat sought peaceful relations with the United States and Israel, and his actions contributed to the emergence of two main radical groups: al-Jihad group and the Islamic group (Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah).

The 1979 peace treaty with Israel was a manifesto, which in the eyes of the Islamic public, sacrificed Palestine and killed the hope of its return to the Palestinians. In Iran, the success of the 1979 Islamic revolution spurred other Islamic movements in the Arab World to pursue the overthrow their apostate regimes and establish Islamic states the way that Iran did. In addition, in 1979, the Soviet "Red Army" had invaded the poor-isolated-Muslim country of Afghanistan. The United States perceived this invasion, which occurred at the peak of the Cold War era, as a strategic threat to its interests. Muslim countries, especially Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, perceived the invasion as political threat to their existence. However, the Islamic public perceived the invasion as a religious war between communism and Islam.

This environment produced a new generation of Islamists. A generation who believed that jihad was the only path a Muslim should take to free Muslim lands, not only

from its invaders, but also from its apostate regimes. This generation marked the beginning of the violent confrontation between the Islamists and their respective regimes, of which the assassination of al-Sadat in 1981 was a part. In addition, it marked the beginning of the global Jihad movement, which we are witnessing today with al-Qaeda.

## **B. THE ORIGINS OF AL QAEDA**

Although al-Qaeda as an independent organization emerged in the late eighties, its roots go back to the late seventies when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. The word al-Qaida (the base) was first used by its founder Osama Bin Laden and his first-line Lieutenants in 1988. The word was a reference to the records that contained information about the members who joined jihads in Afghanistan from all around the world. It was not until 1989 that this word took on meaning for jihad groups in Afghanistan or elsewhere. Burke argues that it was unclear if Bin Laden and his group even called themselves al-Qaeda during this era.<sup>35</sup>

After the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in 1979, Islamic fighters rushed to Afghanistan to support their brothers and fight against the communists. Most Arab nations and the U.S. facilitated the infiltration of those fighters. The United States supported the mujahedeen in order to deny any communist expansion that would threaten oil recourses had the Soviet Union reached the Arab Gulf through Pakistan. Additionally, the U.S. used al-mujahedeen as a proxy to drain the Soviet's power during the peak of the Cold War. Arab countries supported al-mujahedeen for a variety of different reasons. First, some Muslim countries, like Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, supported al-mujahedeen because they fought on their behalf. Second, some countries supported al-Mujahedeen to enhance their status in the west by standing with the United States and its allies against the Soviet Union, and also to enhance their status in the domestic sphere by showing their commitment to defend Muslim countries. Third, other countries found that facilitating the travel of al-mujahedeen to Afghanistan was a good opportunity to get rid of the troublemakers who carried jihadist ideologies and were determined to fight jihad against the regimes in their countries.

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<sup>35</sup> Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 9.

Most of those fighters who travelled to Afghanistan arrived without any organizational backgrounds. Upon their arrival, they joined the fronts to fight side by side with their Afghan brothers, under the leadership of one of the Afghan factions. Abu Jomahh al-Ajazaery, one of the earliest Arab fighters to arrive to Afghanistan, claimed that there were no more than 15 Arab fighters in Afghanistan in 1984.<sup>36</sup> Among the first arrivals to Afghanistan were Osama Bin Laden and Abdullah Azzam, who later established Maktab al-Khadamat (MAK) to administrate al-Mujahedeen affairs. The number of fighters started to increase slowly during this time, and by 1986, the total number reached about 200.<sup>37</sup> In late 1986, Bin Laden established his first independent camp in *Jaji* that he called al-areen wal-maasadah (lion's den). It was not until then that the Arab fighters started working independently of the Afghani fronts.

During this period, all the jihadist efforts displayed the following characteristics: first, the unity of their goals, which was to fight against the Soviet invasion no regard for the fundamental ideological differences between the Arab fighters, whether they be Salafist, jihadists, or Muslim brotherhood. Second, the Arab mujahedeen worked under the direct commands of an Afghani groups. Bin Laden led the first group to work independently, and it consisted of 30 fighters.<sup>38</sup> Third, the jihad work found support, directly or indirectly, from the United States and most of the Arab or Muslim countries. At that time, citizens perceived those fighters as heroes, freedom fighters, and legitimate resisters battling the Evil Empire. Fourth, most of the individuals who travelled to Afghanistan to fight the Soviets were unaware of the different schools of thoughts within the Islamic movements in Afghanistan, which started to surface toward the end of the 1980s. Table 1 explains the jihadists' map during this era.

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<sup>36</sup> Cameel Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwareha: Kessat Aljehadeen al-Arab*, (Lebanon: Beirut, Dar al-Saki, 2007), 15.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 17. Bin Laden established a small camp during this period, which called al-areen wal-ma'sadah (the loin's den) at jaji. In this camp Bin Laden had fought the soviet forces and he achieved a great victory over a soviet commandos platoon in 1987. During this battle, Bin Laden sized an assault rifle from one of the platoon solders, and this rifle appeared with Bin Laden's pictures and meetings since that battle.

Table 1. Jihadist Map During the Late 1980s

Organization name	Leadership	Goals	Component
Maktab al-Khadamat	Abdullah Azzam and Bin Laden	To facilitate al-mujahedeen movements in and out Afghanistan	200 fighter in 1986
Al-Jihad	Sayyed Imam Al-Sharif	Fighting against the soviet existence in Afghanistan	
Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah		Fighting against the soviet existence in Afghanistan	
Al-afghan al-Arab	Unorganized	Fighting against the soviet existence in Afghanistan	From all around the world, especially from the defeated movements in the Arab world like Egypt, Algeria, and Libya. (total of 40 thousands fighters) <sup>39</sup>

### C. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JIHADIST GROUPS THROUGH THE MID-1990S

Key events and circumstances took place before the mid 1990s that contributed to the formulation of a new map for the jihadists (Table 2). First, the Soviet Army started to withdraw from Afghanistan in 1988 and ended its military presence in the country in 1989. Soon after the Soviet withdrawal, the Afghani factions turned on each other, and the battle for the authority continued from 1989 until 1996, when the Taliban resolved the dispute to its advantage. Second, after Army generals canceled the parliamentary elections that the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was slated to win, a “Quasi-civil war” broke out in Algeria between the political Islamic movements and the Algerian forces. Third, General Omar al-Bashir, aided by Hassan al-Turabi (the leader of the Islamic movement in Sudan), assumed power through a military coup in Sudan in 1989. The new regime had no reservations about embracing Islamic groups in Sudan.

<sup>39</sup> Abu Musab al-Suri, “Da’wat al-Moqawmah Al-Islamiyah Al-Alamiah,” 922, *Pulpit of Monotheism and Jihad*, <http://www.tawhed.ws/a?a=hqkfgsb2>, (accessed October 10, 2010).

Fourth, in Somalia, the regime of Mohamed Siad Barre lost control of the country; consequently, the country collapsed and fell into civil war. This anarchic environment allowed extremism to flourish and offered an alternative fighting front to the Afghani jihadist. Finally, 1991 saw the Gulf War against the Iraqi regime that invaded Kuwait in August 1990. The United States led the coalition to expel Iraqi forces from Kuwait after the Gulf countries, especially Saudi Arabia, refused Bin Laden's offer to fight Saddam Husain with his mujahedeen. Bin Laden saw it as illegal and inappropriate to appeal to international forces (infidels) to fight against a Muslim country.

In addition to the aforementioned circumstances, in 1988 and 1989, the Afghan scene witnessed an intellectual dispute among the three major Islamic currents operating in Afghanistan (jihadist, Salafist, and Muslim brotherhood). Each of these currents tried to recruit as many as it could from the thousands of al-mujahedeen who came to Afghanistan without previous organizational alliances. The jihadist map started to change dramatically during this time period, driven by the diversity of jihadist goals in the absence of the Soviet threat, which unified them previously. Their goals shifted back to those of the earlier Afghan era, which was to fight the apostate regimes on national bases. Consequently, the period that followed the Soviet withdrawal witnessed the emergence of several jihadist movements that pursued nationalist goals with a jihadist means. The most important movements that emerged during the late 1980s and early 1990s are as follows: al-Qaeda, administrated by Bin Laden; al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallaha (Armed Islamic Group), which emerged in Algeria in 1992; and Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya (The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group), formed in 1991.

### **1. Al-Qaeda**

As the Arab mujahedeen started to reach Afghanistan in large numbers at the end of the 1980s, they found that the Jihad for which they had come almost finished. With the withdrawal of the Soviet Army in May 1988, the Afghan Arabs, who now numbered in the thousands, started to raise questions about what to do and where to go next. Of course, they knew that their Jihad in Afghanistan would end one day. However, they had no clear concept of what would come next. Would they return to their previous lives as if

nothing had happened? Would they continue the jihad? If they did continue, against whom would they fight? Some of them, such as Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah and Al-Jihad, knew what they wanted to do next. For these two groups, Afghanistan was just a place to train, reorganize, and prepare for the next battle with the regime in their home country. For the rest of them, the future was not clear.

Bin Laden, after some time with the Egyptian al-Jihad members, found himself at odds with Abdullah Azzam. Thus, he decided to establish his own organization. In 2002, authorities in Bosnia found documents and files titled Tareekh Osama (Osama's history) that been stored on an Islamic charity organization computer. One of these important documents includes a discussion between Bin Laden and one of the founding members of al-Qaeda (Abu al-Rida) about the establishment of a new group. In this paper, Bin Laden was complaining to Abu al-Rida about his failure to start a new organization or Islamic group. One week later, as the documents revealed, Bin Laden held a meeting where he set the stage to form the al-Qaeda organization.<sup>40</sup>

Structurally speaking, al-Qaeda had no organizational configuration beyond its name at that stage; it was more a network that facilitated the jihadists' efforts in and out of Afghanistan. Bin Laden, during this period, was not a leader of jihadists in the way that we see him now. He said in his papers, "I am one person."<sup>41</sup> Groups who were operating during this period planned their operations unilaterally based on their personal perceptions of an operations contribution to their goals' success; however, Bin Laden's role was to facilitate and to support such operations either financially or in other ways.

In addition, al-Qaeda did not establish its own distinctive doctrine, which is an essential element the formation of an organization, as that would undermine Bin Laden's efforts to administer the network. Bin Laden followed the Wahabbism traditions, some followed the classical Salafist lines like the Muslim brotherhood, and others followed the Salafist-jihadist or al-salafyah al-jihadiyah like al-jihad and al-Islamiyah. These Islamic currents never joined together to embrace one of the most important concepts of Jihad,

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<sup>40</sup> Peter Bergen, *The Osama Bin Laden I know: An Oral History of Al-Qaeda's Leader* (New York: Peter Press, 2006), 75–81.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 79.

which is al-hakimyah (the legitimacy of the Muslim rulers who does not fully implement *Shariah* law and the legality of overthrowing him by force). Therefore, the argument that suggests that al-Qaeda was unique and Bin Laden was a powerful figure at the top of an organization was capable of projecting its own ideology and doctrine during this phase is far from logical.

## **2. The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)**

The Libyan fighters started to establish their organization—the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)—in Afghanistan during the early 1990s. After the Soviet Army started to withdraw from Afghanistan, the LIFG moved to Sudan, first, to be as close as possible to their country and second, to avoid involvement in the dispute between the different Afghani factions. From 1990 to 1995, the organization worked underground. It was not until October 1995 that the group announced itself and entered in a direct confrontation with the Libyan regime forces.<sup>42</sup>

The (LIFG) confined its activities to confrontations with Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's regime in Libya, as they considered him an infidel. The (LIFG) pursued its goal—to overthrow the regime by force in order to uphold God's law and to establish an Islamic state—without getting involved in a bloody confrontation with the Libyan society, and without engaging in cross-border alliances. When the organization started to lose too many of its members, it changed strategies and targeted the president himself. During 1996, the organization attempted two separate assassination attacks against President Gaddafi, but fortunately, he survived both of them.

## **3. The Algerian Armed Islamic Group (GIA)**

In early 1988, the Algerian government launched a series of campaigns against Islamic movements in the country. By that time, Afghanistan had created a relief front

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<sup>42</sup> Evan F. Kohlmann and Josh Lefkowitz, "Dossier: Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) (Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatila)," *The NEFA Foundation*, October 2007, <http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefalifg1007.pdf>, (accessed November 28, 2010).

where those oppressed peoples could go. Abdullah Azzam's office, MAK, received 3000 fighters, and they distributed them over the three main Afghani factions (Hekmatyar, Massoud, and Sayyaf).<sup>43</sup>

After the withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan, most of the Algerian jihadists returned to Algeria. In 1992, the Algerian military establishment stopped the second round of Algerian elections and forced President Chadli Bin Jadid to resign. They brought former military General, Mohamed Boudiaf, in to serve as president of the State. The military regime launched a military campaign to suppress the Islamic Salvation Front in early 1992 and ended its great push for the seizure of the state.<sup>44</sup> The military campaign against the Islamic movements in Algeria focused on the well-known intellectual leadership of the Islamic Salvation Front like Abassi Madani and Ali BinHadj. Then the regime widened its campaign to include all of the representatives and local governors who won the previous election.

These conditions strengthened the position of the radicals who prompted members and supporters of the Islamic Salvation Front to respond violently against the military intervention. Consequently, these measures pulled in the moderate Islamic figures and contributed to the emergence of unknown radical groups in their place. Therefore, it is arguable that the Algerian authority had an indirect and unintentional role in producing these radical groups.

The Algerian-Afghani veterans found a chance to apply their jihad experiences from Afghanistan to their home country, since it became clear that Afghanistan was not a good choice for them anymore. The Algerian local radical-Salafist goals meshed with the returnee radical-jihadist ones; both wanted to uphold God's law and establish an Islamic state by overthrowing a tyrannical regime. Moreover, these radical groups exploited the oppressive environment to attract Muslims with a more moderate ideology, like the Muslim brotherhood in Algeria.

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<sup>43</sup> Mohammad Mukadam, "The Algerian Afghans from the Group to al-Qaeda Organization," *Al Hayat newspaper*, November 23, 2001.

<sup>44</sup> Kenneth Katzman, "Terrorism: Near Eastern Groups and State Sponsors, 2002", *Congressional Research Service: Library of Congress*, February 13, 2002), 17, <http://www.fas.org/irp/crs/RL31119.pdf>, (accessed November 20, 2010).

The year 1992 witnessed the birth of one of the most radical movements in Algeria, called al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallaha (Armed Islamic Group or GIA). By 1994, the GIA united 95 percent of the Algerian Islamic movements under its umbrella. The GIA became more active and more violent; it has been connected to the bloodiest attacks and massacres against civilians, military forces and foreigners. Although the GIA had embraced the Algerian “Afghani jihadists” who had close relationships with al-Qaeda, it refused to establish any significant connection with Bin Laden and his organization. Noman Binotman, one of the LIFG leaders claimed that in 1995 a delegation associated with the GIA visited Sudan and met with Bin Laden. During the meeting, the delegation, led by Abu Baseer, warned Bin Laden not to intervene in the Algerian jihadist issue. He threatened Bin Laden by telling him “Whoever dares to support any of the Algerian jihadist groups will be beheaded”. Bin Laden told his men, “To cooperate with this group is to cooperate with the infidels”.<sup>45</sup>

#### **4. Egyptian Jihadist Groups**

The two main Egyptian jihadist groups, like other Islamic groups, tried to overthrow the [apostate] regime and establish an Islamic state in its place. Soon after the withdrawal of the Soviet Army from Afghanistan, the Egyptian veterans of the Afghani war moved to Sudan. There, established training camps on farms that they bought or rented, bought weapons, and prepared themselves for a new confrontation with the Egyptian regime. After the two groups separated from each other, following the assassination of President al-Sadat in 1981, they each took a separate approach to confront the regime.

Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah, led by the blind Sheikh, Omar Abdel al-Rahman, started “to attack tourists and secular [symbols]. The group bombed theaters, bookstores, and banks. In 1995, the group allegedly joined forces with the Egyptian terrorist group al-Jihad in a failed assassination attempt on [President] Mubarak in Addis Ababa,

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<sup>45</sup> Altaweel, *Al-Qaida Wa-Akhwateha*, 167.

Ethiopia.”<sup>46</sup> “In September 1997, [they] killed nine German tourists and their driver in front of the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. Two months later, the group killed 62 people at a tourist site in Luxor.”<sup>47</sup>

Unlike Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah, which was conducting its bloody attacks against the government's main revenue, tourism, al-jihad focused more on attacking targets that represented Egyptian authority. In August 1993, they targeted the Egyptian Minister of Interior using a suicide bomber. Later, they tried to kill the prime minister in a bomb attack.<sup>48</sup> The group also attempted to target President Mubarak while he was in Ethiopia, but fortunately, he escaped the assassination attempt. On 19 November 1995, the Islamic jihad attacked the Egyptian embassy in Islamabad, bombing it with two suicide cars. This operation came as retaliation against Egyptian intelligence's use of immoral methods to recruit two boys in Sudan to spy on al-zawahiri and his group.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup>Anthony Keats, "In the Spotlight: Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyah - Islamic Group," *Center for Defense Information*, <http://www.cdi.org/program/document.cfm?DocumentID=389&StartRow=1&ListRows=10&appendURL=&Orderby=D.DateLastUpdated>, (accessed 11/28/2010, 2010).

<sup>47</sup> Douglas Jehl, "Attack on Cairo Tourist Bus Kills 9 Germans and Driver," *The New York Times*, sec. world, September 19, 1997, <http://www.nytimes.com/1997/09/19/world/attack-on-cairo-tourist-bus-kills-9-germans-and-driver.html>, (accessed November 28, /2010).

<sup>48</sup> Bruce Riedel, *the Search for al-Qaeda: its Leadership, Ideology, and Future*, (Washington, DC: the Brookings Institution, 2008), 22.

<sup>49</sup> Altaweel, al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha, 184-192, (Altaweel in these pages describes the story of recruiting two young boys in Sudan to gather information about al-mujahedeen movements, names, and activities. He explains the whole recruiting process and how the Egyptian intelligence agencies had practiced sex with one of the boys after they drugged him. They videotaped it and they started to blackmail them. After the group discovered them, they were executed. So the embassy attack came as revenge. And it also explained why the group attacked the embassy 10 months after they had decided to stop their armed attacks against the Egyptian government in 1995).

Table 2. Jihadist Map from 1989 to mid-1990s

Organization name	Leadership	Goals	Component
Al-Qaeda	Bin Laden	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Fighting communism in Yemen</li> <li>2. Criticizing the American existent in the holy lands</li> <li>3. Supporting other jihadist's projects.</li> </ol>	Key members from Al-Jihad like abu ubidah al- Bانشري and Abu hafs al-masri and (314 members) <sup>50</sup>
Egyptian Islamic Jihad (EIJ), Islamic Jihad or al-jihad	Ayman al-Zawahiri	Overthrow the Egyptian Government(assassination) and establish an Islamic state	Educated members, official high ranks, and social elite
Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah, the Islamic Group	Omar Abdel-Rahman	Overthrow the Egyptian Government and establish an Islamic state by targeting police, banks, tourists, and government officials (secular symbols)	Peasants, uneducated members, and typical citizens
Armed Islamic Group (GIA), al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyah al-Musallaha	Abdelhak Alayada	Overthrow the Algerian Government and establish an Islamic state by targeting civilians, military, police, tourists, and other moderate Islamic movements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Algerian-afghan veterans</li> <li>2. Local Salafist</li> <li>3. Some members of the Islamic Salvation Front</li> <li>4. Members of the Islamic salvation army</li> </ol>
Libyan Islamic fighting group (LIFG), Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya	Abdu al-Salam al-dwady	Overthrow the Libyan regime and establish an Islamic state by targeting military, police, and avoiding any civilian killing	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local Jihadist movements</li> <li>2. Libyan-afghan fighters</li> <li>3. Libyan al-Qaeda members</li> </ol>

#### D. JIHADISTS' GOALS

The jihadists' goals after the afghan war shifted toward establishing local Islamic states that did not exceed their countries borders; each group focused on fighting the near enemy (the apostate regimes or the western poppies) in their respective countries. There were almost no practical agreements between the jihadists to unify their efforts in order to achieve their goals. Thus, argument that considers all jihadists as one unit seeking to

<sup>50</sup> Bergen, *the Osama Bin Laden I know*, 79.

establish the Islamic Khalifaht is a misleading perception. Even though the leaders of these groups voice this idea loudly, in reality, their different methods to achieve this goal have been self-destructive. Gerges argues, “Localism not globalism, informed the thinking and action of [jihadis] who had initially fought in Afghanistan.”<sup>51</sup>

With respects to Bin Laden’s goals, the establishment meeting documents illustrate that Bin Laden had no specific future missions or fronts for jihadists. However, through his discourses and actions during that era, Bin Laden’s goals encompassed three main concepts. First, he wanted to secure the withdrawal of the United States troops from the Gulf area. Therefore, he offered his services to fight the Iraqi regime and to free Kuwait with jihadists instead of outsiders. When they refused his offer, he sharply criticized the Saudi House for inviting the American forces into the holy lands. In 1994, Bin Laden wrote a letter to the Saudi chief mufti, Bin Bazz, (the highest Islamic theological figure in Saudi Arabia). In this letter, he disparaged the Saudi house and Bin Bazz as well. He criticized the Saudi regime for supporting the peace agreement between the Palestine and the Israel in Oslo, and he accused the Saudi regime of corruption, as they invited the infidels (American forces) to the holy lands.<sup>52</sup> Riedel argues, “This letter appears to be written more in sorrow than in anger. The tone is that of a man severely disappointed in his own government.”<sup>53</sup> As he became more annoying to the regime, they responded by warning him and then limiting his free movements by confiscating his passport.

Bin Laden’s second goal was to overthrow the southern communist party in Yemen, by supporting Islamist groups in that country. Abu Musab al-Suri argues that Bin Laden had no operational goals in Afghanistan, and Sheikh Osama did not have any specific projects other than supporting jihadist groups, except in Yemen.<sup>54</sup> However, the end of the communism in Afghanistan in the early 1990s and in Yemen in 1994, after

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<sup>51</sup> Gerges Fawaz, *the Far Enemy: Why Jihad Went Global*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 13.

<sup>52</sup> Riedel, *the Search for al-Qaeda*, 52.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 53.

<sup>54</sup> Al-Suri, *Da’wat al-Moqawmah*, 730.

most of the communist party was exiled from the country, forced Bin Laden seek a new refuge. Consequently, he made his way to Pakistan, and from Pakistan, he moved to Afghanistan. There, the Afghani groups were fighting each other over the capital. When he failed to reconcile the warring factions, he left Afghanistan and went to Sudan, where most Arab jihadists had moved previously.

From Sudan, Bin Laden pursued his third goal, which was to achieve compatibility among the jihadists groups and to financially support other jihadists and provide personnel on some occasions. In his efforts to create this compatibility between the different jihadists, he formed the Islamic Army Shura that embraced members from all Middle Eastern and the North African states.<sup>55</sup> In terms of financial support, Bergen cited Abdullah Anas recalling that Bin Laden spent 1.5 million U.S. dollars as a project to enter Kabul, which was under the communist party at the time. Bergen also argues Bin Laden gave al-Zawahiri \$100,000 to support his organization.<sup>56</sup> In terms of physical support, in 1993, Bin Laden sent a group of fighters to Somalia. Although the number of al-Qaeda fighters is debatable, Bin Laden sent fighters to fight the American presence in the country because he claimed that the American intervention in Somalia was a product of American interests to undermine the Islamic movement in Sudan and achieve full control over the gulf region.<sup>57</sup>

## **E. THE RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN JIHADISTS**

The relationships in the jihadists' community lacked compatibility. During this era, disputes surfaced between not only organizations in different countries, but also within the organizations themselves and other local groups. The disagreements between the jihadists were usually about the legitimacy means, selection of targets, Doctrinal ideals (Salafist, jihadists, and Muslim brotherhood ideology), organizational sovereignty, leadership positions, and the diversity of each groups' goals.

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<sup>55</sup> Thomas H. Kean and Others, "The 911 Commission Report," 58, Washington, D.C., <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/report/911Report.pdf>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>56</sup> Bergen, *the Osama Bin Laden I know*, 70 and 104.

<sup>57</sup> Khalid Al Hamadi, "Inside Al-Qaeda as Narrated by Abu Jandal (Nasser Al-Bahri), Bin Laden's Former Bodyguard," *Al Qudus al-Arabi*, March 19, 2005, <http://81.144.208.20:9090/pdf/2005/03Mar/19MarSat/Quds17.pdf> (accessed November 26, 2010).

## **1. Relations Between the GIA and the LIFG and With Bin Laden**

The relationship between the two major organizations, the GIA and the LIFG, through the mid 1990s reflected the depth of methodological and ideological differences within the jihadist community. After the eruption of the security situation in Algeria, the LIFG leadership decided to send a group of fighters to explore the situation and support their fellow Afghani fighters in Algeria. When the group arrived in Algeria, they secretly reported back to their headquarters in Sudan. Most of these reports indicated that the GIA were violating the doctrines of Jihad through the legitimization of the indiscriminate killing of civilians, authority disputes, and leadership competitions among the jihadist groups. They also reported propaganda that Algerian secret services had infiltrated the GIA. After sending two delegations, the LIFG decided to send a third group of 15 fighters to be directly involved in operations alongside the GIA group.<sup>58</sup>

Noman Benotman, one of the well-known leaders among the LIFG, described how poor the relations were between the two North African groups as evidenced by what happened to the 15 fighters. He said, those fighters were not from the leadership line, but were chosen from among the best fighters from the Afghani war.<sup>59</sup> Soon after the fighters had arrived in Algeria, the LIFG headquarters in Sudan lost their trace. The LIFG sent another team to find out what had happened to the previous group. This team reported back that the 15 fighters might have been killed by the GIA. The GIA later admitted that this was the case. The GIA justified their killing by claiming that the group had left them and joined one of the rival groups in Algeria. Boudali argues this experience taught other groups to the danger of cooperating with the Algerians. “The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) learned this lesson the hard way when the GIA

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<sup>58</sup> Altaweel, *Al-Qaida Wa-Akhwateha*, 130.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., 130.

killed several LIFG fighters who had been sent to Algeria for joint training.”<sup>60</sup> In response to that event, the LIFG announced its disengagement and distanced itself from the radical acts carried out by the GIA.

After [Djamel Zitouni] became the leader of the group, there was a noticeable change in the characteristics of the jihad waged under the banner of the Armed Islamic Group. Breaches and violations of Shariah law increased incrementally day after day... Blood was spilled, and even now, there is still no clear or compelling Shariah basis for its spilling... This was the case with [the killing of] Shaykh Mohammed al-Said, Abdelrazak Radjam, and others. Many Algerian Muslims were killed and their death was either denounced or was said to be as an act of deterrence or something like that. Eventually, the struggle appeared to be a battle between the movement and the Muslims of Algeria.<sup>61</sup>

With respect to GIA relations with Bin Laden, Muhammad Mukadam argues Bin Laden offered the GIA financial support and fighters in exchange for the establishment of al-Qaeda training camps in Algeria. This was a request that Djamel Zitouni viewed as inappropriate bargaining.<sup>62</sup> Therefore, Zitouni started to kill all al-Qaeda members and also started to target those who belonged to the Afghani current. He justified their killing by claiming they were Bin Laden’s spies. In addition, Mukadam argues Bin Laden sent a satellite phone to Zitouni as a gift, but Zitouni ordered his group to kill the messenger who brought the phone.<sup>63</sup>

## **2. Relations Inside the GIA**

The GIA did not only engage in confrontations and disputes with other foreign organization like the LIFG, but also experienced confrontations and disputes within the organization. The GIA emerged as an offshoot of the Islamic Salvation Front *Front*

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<sup>60</sup> Lianne Boudali, “The GSPC: Newest Franchise in Al-Qa’ida’s Global Jihad,” *West Point: Combating Terrorism Center*, 2007, 8, [http://www.ctc.usma.edu/publications/pdf/Kennedy\\_GSPC\\_041207\\_update.pdf](http://www.ctc.usma.edu/publications/pdf/Kennedy_GSPC_041207_update.pdf) (accessed November 26, 2010).

<sup>61</sup> Evan F. Kohlmann, “Two Decades of Jihad in Algeria: the GIA, the GSPC and Al-Qaeda,” *The NEFA Foundation*, May, 2007, 11, <http://www.nefaffoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefagspc0507.pdf> (accessed November 29 2010). The Arabic version of the announcement can be accessed at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=8xj2hdkm>.

<sup>62</sup> Mukadam, “*The Algerian Afghans*,” 26 November, 2001, issue 14134.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

*Islamique du Salut, FIS*, which was a peaceful Islamic organization that won the democratic election in 1991. The GIA soon turned on the FIS and started to target its leadership, accusing them of apostasy for promoting democratic elections and consolidation with the tyrant regime. The group reached its peak of extremism when Jamal Zitouni took over the group. Haddam who was the president of the Parliamentary Delegation Abroad of Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front claimed, “[This group the GIA] assassinated the main FIS leaders”.<sup>64</sup> He adds, “This was this action of Jamal Zeitouni and his group, which eventually revealed its real identity: they are from At-Takfir wa'l-Hijra.”<sup>65</sup>

RAND reported, “[The] GIA in its attacks drew no distinction between noncombatant supporters or opponents in its jihad against the regime. Anyone in Algeria who did not conform to the GIA doctrine was a potential target”.<sup>66</sup> The policies adopted by the GIA leadership in general, and by Zeitouni in particular, caused tension and disagreements both inside and outside the organization. The GIA actions caused some individuals, like Essaid and Rajjam, to disengage themselves from the organization. In response, Zeitouni killed them both, and he justified their killing by claiming they were deviating from the right path by calling for reconciliation with the Algerian government.<sup>67</sup> In July 1996, fellow jihadists ambushed and assassinated Zitouni.<sup>68</sup>

After Zitouni’s assassination, Antar Zouabri, who was member of Zitouni’s GIA Shura Council, took command of the GIA.<sup>69</sup> Zouabri gained power using very coercive means. When he took over the group, he started to kill anyone who did not agree with him. Moreover, he issued a fatwa that considered the Algerian people infidels and

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<sup>64</sup> Anwar Haddam, “An Islamist Vision for Algeria,” Interview by Daniel Pipes and Patrick Clawson, *Middle East Quarterly*, September 1996, <http://www.meforum.org/316/anwar-n-haddam-an-islamist-vision-for-algeria> (accessed November 29, 2010).

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Dalia Kaye and Others, “More Freedom, Less Terror?: Liberalization and Political Violence in the Arab World,” *RAND Corporation*, 2008, 127-128, [http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND\\_MG772.pdf](http://www.rand.org/pubs/monographs/2008/RAND_MG772.pdf), (Accessed November 29, 2010).

<sup>67</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 219.

<sup>68</sup> Kohlmann, “Two Decades,” 9.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 9.

apostates altogether. Consequently, the GIA started to lose its supporter base. It started to fall apart from the division and the departure of its members. Later, in 1998, the group changed its name into the Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat (GSPC).

### **3. Relations Between al-Jihad and al-Islamiyah**

This dark image of the GIA relations in the mid-1990s was not distinctive to the jihadists' project in Algeria; it was also a very common image of the relations of the jihadists' project in Egypt. However, one can say that the Egyptian case was less bloody than the Algerian example. The disputes and the competitions between the Egyptian groups took the form of ideological and social conflicts, and did not involve weaponry in any significant way. The two groups failed at two attempts to unify and merge into one organization. Gerges argues it was, "[because of the] unwillingness and inability of their senior leaders to put differences aside and transcend vested interests."<sup>70</sup>

The organizations' components played a big role in this division. The Islamic jihad embraced the elites like doctors, lawyers, teachers, military, and police officers, while al-Islamiyah recruited most of its members from the peasant class and uneducated youth. Al-Islamiyah was more popular and more active. Al-jihad left no significant mark in its confrontations with Egyptian regime, but al-Islamiyah did. Although the two groups sought the same idealistic benefits and recognized the urgent need for unification, their attempts to accomplish this failed.

The first unifying attempts failed because of an ideological disagreement over the legality of the blind being in command. Al-jihad disagreed with al-Islamiyah over sheik Abdel Rahman as the leader of al-Islamiyah, because he was blind. This doctrine, in Islam, is called wilayat al-dariir or rule of the blind. This issue was further complicated after the imprisonment of a blind sheik accused of planning attacks in the United States. Al-jihad disagreed with al-Islamiyah again over another doctrine called Wilayat al-Asier or the rule of the prisoner.

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<sup>70</sup> Fawaz, *the Far Enemy*, 100.

After the Egyptian government started to counter both groups during the mid 1990s, they agreed about the urgency to unify their efforts to face the state. In 1994, the two groups made a second attempt to merge and unify as one organization, where a group of consults (Majles al Showra) would control both groups. This attempt also failed. The main issue that hindered their second attempt at unity was also of an ideological nature. They disagreed over an issue called the Excuse of the un-Knowledge or al-owther bel-Jjahel, which means an individual, who commits a wrong doing unintentionally, is not responsible, and his lack of knowledge is excusable. However, al-jihad argued that people should be held accountable for their actions and there are no excuses for a lack of knowledge. In response, al-Islamiyah accused al-jihad group of deviating from the Islam-right path.

#### **4. Relations Inside al-Jihad and al-Islamiyah**

Neither of the two main jihadists groups in Egypt was free of internal strife. Al-jihad fighters, who came back from Afghanistan, intended to be reserve forces on call for any critical situations determined by the leadership. Altaweel argues that those fighters had no idea about these plans. Therefore, upon their arrival they started to speak up about their experiences in Afghanistan. In addition, they also complained about their role in the confrontation with the apostate regime; “al-Islamiyah members are carrying out brave operations and we are hiding and doing nothing.”<sup>71</sup> Each time al-Islamiyah launched an operation; they captured several people of al-jihad, simply because they were uninformed and unprepared. The government apparatus captured thousands of the group’s members and started to trail them in massive numbers in an operation called Tla’e al-fateh. In this environment, Ahmad Ājyzh and a group of others accused al- Zawahiri of freezing al-jihad and maintaining a passive stand toward those who fall one into the hands of the Egyptian forces. Therefore they dissented from al-Zawahiri and established their own organization called Tla’ e al-fateh.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 13.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 137.

Inside al-Islamiyah, there was a disagreement over the truce initiative offered by the historical leadership from their prison cells in July 1997. This disagreement was a factor in the attack against tourism in the site of Luxor. The historical leadership condemned the attack while Refai Taha, a key leader in al-Islamiyah who opposed the ceasefire initiative, praised it. Refai Taha challenged the opinion of the imprisoned leadership by being one of the first signatories on the declaration announcement of the emergence of the World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders.<sup>73</sup>

## **5. Bin Laden's Relations**

As the establishing minutes reveal, al-Qaeda's formation was a result of Bin Laden's dissatisfaction with Azzam's thoughts and the way he administrated Maktab al-Khadamat.<sup>74</sup> Azzam was Bin Laden's primary mentor during the mid 1980s, and despite Azzam's contributions to his fame; Bin Laden started to distance himself from Azzam and disputes started between them. Bin Laden and Azzam's relations were inversely proportional to Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri's relations. As he became closer to al-Zawahiri, he moved further away from Azzam.

The dispute between Azzam and Bin Laden stemmed from two main themes: how to do jihad in Afghanistan and where to go after Afghanistan. Unlike Azzam, Bin Laden sought to establish separate Arab jihadists that operated independently of the Afghan factions. Contradictory to this view, Azzam sought to spread jihadists over the Afghani factions, as it would allow for better access to religious education, training, and different financial resources than they could find in separate camps. Another area of disagreement was over which faction the jihadist should support. Bin Laden wanted to support Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, the leader of *al-Hezb-e Islami*, while Azzam wanted to support rival warlord, Ahmad Shah Massoud (Lion of Panjshir), who was a thorn to the Soviets.

In respect to where to go after Afghanistan, Azzam's disagreement was not with Bin Laden directly, but with his close circle of Egyptian members of al-Jihad. Azzam, as a representative of the Muslim brotherhood, believed that jihad efforts had to focus on

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<sup>73</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwareha*, 291.

<sup>74</sup> Bergen, *the Osama Bin Laden I Know*, 80.

freeing occupied Muslim lands like Afghanistan, Palestine, and even Spain. To the contrary, Bin Laden's close circle from *al-Jihad* sought to pursue the goal of overthrowing the apostate regimes in the Muslim world. Azzam rejected this concept. Hotifa Azzam recalls how *al-Jihad* members insulted and accused his father of being penetrated by American intelligence agencies, and how they abandoned his speeches in Friday's sermons.<sup>75</sup>

As with any other group, Bin Laden's young-organization was not free of internal rivalry and disagreements. Gerges argues, "Al-Qaeda, like other bureaucracies, was susceptible to internal rivalries along, ethnic, nationalist and regional lines and financial and petty quarrels stemming from favoritism and penny-pinching."<sup>76</sup> Socially, there were disagreements between the jihadists over the influence of the Egyptians over the organization. Egyptians held all of the sensitive leadership positions.

When al-Fadl testified in court after he left Bin Laden and defected to the USA, he was asked if the members of al-Qaeda complained about the number of Egyptians in al-Qaeda. He said yes, and he added that he had told Bin Laden about this issue. He also commented on the conflicts inside the organization over economic issues and said people in the organization complained about these issues.<sup>77</sup> Jamal Khelifa, Bin Laden's brother-in-law, argued that Egyptians replaced Bin Laden's former close friends, as well as him. He added that Bin Laden did not listen to anybody except the Egyptians, who were able to manipulate and brainwash him.<sup>78</sup>

Despite the empirical evidence that emphasizes Bin Laden's close ties with the Egyptian al-Jihad group, Benotman contradicts such arguments recalling that "in 89 and 90 a lot of people from the jihadi movements—they considered Bin Laden as a non-Muslim—he doesn't care about the Arab regimes. He doesn't declare Saudi King Fahd a non-Muslim. He didn't care to fight in India or Egypt or Algeria. And I heard from the leaders of the Egyptian Jihad: 'spoiled Saudi with a lot of cash; that's it; a decent soft

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<sup>75</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 48.

<sup>76</sup> Fawaz, *the Far Enemy*, 100.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 104–105.

<sup>78</sup> Bergen, *the Osama Bin Laden I know*, 111.

guy, nothing more. He's not a Jihadist; he doesn't know anything about how to launch war. He's still thinking about the Saudis as if they are legitimate regime.”<sup>79</sup>

After 1967, people in the Arab world lost faith in nationalist movements; therefore, they turned to the Islamic movements as a substitute. The invasion of Afghanistan by the Red Army in 1979, offered the oppressed Islamic movement an alternative place to go. Therefore, thousands of Muslim youths performed *Hijrah* (expatriation) from a place of oppression to a place where they could defend their brothers and build their capabilities. It was an imitation of the prophet Mohammad's (peace be upon him) journey from his home country (Makkah) where he was oppressed by his own people, to Madinah to build an Islamic *Umah*. A movement that had enabled Muslims to build their capabilities and then to achieve victory over those who oppressed them. Dialectically, the Afghan War era constitutes the establishment period for the most violent Islamic groups, who later returned to their home countries and entered into bloody confrontations with their regimes.

Al-Qaeda and other current groups, as well as most of the Islamic movements back then, are portrayed as one unit (Umah) that seeks one ultimate goal (establishing the Khalifaht) with one distinctive mean, which is violence. This was and is a misconception of the realities about these groups and organizations. Before the declaration of the war on terrorism, which began on October 7, 2001 with the bombardment of Afghanistan, the jihadist groups displayed diversity in their goals. In addition, their capability to sustain the Jihad work was limited, especially when they started fighting jihad inside their countries. Most importantly, their relations with each other were very poor. Rivalry marked their relations not only with each other level, but also within their own organizations. The next chapter will discuss how these groups failed to confront their local regimes as a result of the aforementioned issues. Had U.S. policy makers comprehended these realities, they would have excluded a military response, and al-Qaeda would have been isolated and neutralized.

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<sup>79</sup> Bergen, *the Osama Bin Laden I know*, 109.

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### **III. THE DEMISE OF NATIONAL JIHADISTS AND AL-QAEDA'S RISE**

The previous chapter discussed the rise of localized Islamist insurgencies in the Middle East and North Africa. This chapter will discuss the failure of these insurgencies. It will also examine how they affected the growth of al-Qaeda after 9/11. The portrayal of al-Qaeda as a giant threat to the United States that represented all of the terrorist groups in the Middle East is common. This chapter will challenge this wisdom and argue that all jihadist groups, including al-Qaeda, were doomed to fail under the pressure of the Middle Eastern regimes. The capability of these groups to mobilize the Islamic populace was limited to radicals with whom they enjoyed connections through kinships or work interactions. However, as chapter four will discuss, al-Qaeda and the groups that have merged with it have flourished after the declaration of the war on terrorism.

#### **A. JIHADIST FAILURE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL**

By 1997, the jihadist's efforts to overthrow the apostate regimes and establish Islamic states that uphold God's law had failed. The result was an obvious landslide victory for the state and a humiliating defeat for these groups. The enormous losses suffered by these groups also embodied this failure. Tens of thousands of detainees filled the government's prisons. The regimes carried out real massacres against these groups. The harsh crackdowns and the massive intelligence operations, helped by the state media, brought the jihadists to their knees. They scattered over four main places: graves, prisons, asylum refugees, and on the run. The following pages tell the story of how each group failed.

##### **1. Failure of the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)**

The LIFG, established in Afghanistan in 1990, started to build its organizational capacity by forming cells inside Libya, recruiting people to its cause, and securing the needed tools (weapons, explosives, ammunition and finance) for their next battle with the regime. Crises events soon interrupted this phase, when the military establishment cancelled the democratic elections that the Islamic Salvation Front hoped would result in

its advantage. In response to the Algerian crisis, the LIFG leadership sent its best fighters to Algeria on a scout mission to achieve several goals. First, they wanted to support the Algerian jihadists, especially those whom they knew and fought with on the Afghani fronts. Second, the LIFG wanted to secure a foothold in Algeria, especially at the borders with Libya, to use it as a platform for their future operations against al-Kaddafi. Third, the first readings of the situation in Algeria suggested that the GIA had the capabilities to topple the Algerian regime, and the LIFG believed that the GIA would pay back their efforts if they arrived into power. Finally, According to Benotman, “One of the reasons for going to fight in Algeria was to prevent the erosion of their members’ fighting skills after the war in Afghanistan.”<sup>80</sup> However, as the saying goes, “The winds come undesirable to the ships,” and the results have been counterproductive and disastrous. The group that they sent soon clashed with the GIA leadership and never came back. Later, they discovered that the GIA leader, Jamal Zaitouni, liquidated the group.

At their internal front, in July 1995 the LIFG had to prematurely leave the underground preparation phase and declare its existence publicly. Benotman argues that the deceleration was against the will of the leadership and was a consequence of an “amateurish and rogue operation”.<sup>81</sup> In July 1995, a local cell of the LIFG carried out a rescue operation to free one of its elements, Khalid Bkachic, from al-Jala’a hospital in Benghazi where he was being held by the Libyan security forces for treatment. The success of the operation, and the manner in which they carried it out, sparked the anger of senior security officials, who insisted on uncovering the doers and arresting them. Search operations led the security forces to a farm on the outskirts of Benghazi, which the LIGF used as a hideout. After finding the farm, al-Kaddafi security forces dismantled cells one after another, and the organization fell down like “rosary beads”. Four months later, after

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<sup>80</sup> Alison Pargeter, “LIFG: An Organization in Eclipse,” *the Jamestown Foundation*, November 3, 2005, [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=602&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=180&no\\_cache=1](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/gta/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=602&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=180&no_cache=1), (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>81</sup> Cameel Altaweel, “Al-Afghan al-Libyoun: Kessat ea’lan al-Jama’ah Wa Bina al-khalaya wa Tikal al-Emir al Awal [The Libyan Afghans: The Story of the Group Declaration, the Setting up of Their Cells and the Arrest of the First Emir],” *London al-Hayat*, September 16, 2005, <http://www.daralhayat.com/archivearticle/70199>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

propaganda started to spread in the country about the real entity behind these operations, some opposition groups accused the regime itself of creating these events, so the LIFG decided to declare itself to the Libyan public.<sup>82</sup>

Within two years of the LIFG self-declaration, the might of al- Gaddafi forces dissolved most of the group's cells. Even the leadership of the group in Sudan could not escape al-Gaddafi's influence. He exerted pressure over the Sudanese to uncover the Libyan fugitives and expose their leadership.<sup>83</sup> To avoid any political consequences with Libya, Sudan asked not only the Libyans to leave, but also expelled all other jihadists groups. Under these circumstances, the LIFG's goal was no longer to overthrow the regime, but simply to survive. Therefore, the group leadership issued an order to their followers not to initiate any operations against the Libyan forces unless it was necessary for self-defense. They ordered key figures to leave the country instantly and warned those who refused to leave that they faced expulsion from the group. In October 1997, the group suffered the loss of its leader, Abdul Rahman Hattab.<sup>84</sup>

"In 1999, Gaddafi declared his regime's success in eliminating the armed Libyan Islamists in his country and in inflicting a fatal blow on the LIFG."<sup>85</sup> Altaweel argues that the escaped leadership moved to Turkey, where they called for a meeting to discuss their failure and the end of any armed activities in Libya. Although the group stopped acting against the regime after Hattab's killing, it was not until the year 2000 that the LIFG leadership officially agreed to stop all armed actions against the Libyan regime for three years.<sup>86</sup> In this way, the largest and the most consistent Islamic jihadists group of that era failed to achieve its goal.

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<sup>82</sup> Cameel Altaweel, "Al-Afghan al-Libyoun: Kessat ea'lan al-Jama'ah Wa Bina al-khalaya wa Tikal al-Emir al Awal [The Libyan Afghans: The Story of the Group Declaration, the Setting up of Their Cells and the Arrest of the First Emir]," *London al-Hayat*, September 16, 2005, <http://www.daralhayat.com/archivearticle/70199>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>83</sup> Kohlmann, "Dossie,r" 10.

<sup>84</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 263.

<sup>85</sup> ICT's Jihadi Websites Monitoring Group "The De-Radicalization Process of Terrorist Organizations," *international institute for counterterrorism*, August , 2010, [http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWMG\\_De\\_Radicalization\\_LIFG.pdf](http://www.ict.org.il/Portals/0/Internet%20Monitoring%20Group/JWMG_De_Radicalization_LIFG.pdf), (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>86</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 263–265.

The remaining individuals and leadership components of LIFG groups, like other Islamic jihadists, faced very limited choices. They had no place in their home countries, and they were no longer welcome in Sudan. In addition, most of the jihadists groups were on the watch lists of the international community. Only Afghanistan, the motherland of the jihadists, opened its doors again to them after the rise of Taliban.

## **2. Failure of the GIA**

What happened to the LIFG was not an isolated occurrence. The Algerian jihad project also ended in failure. However, the latter, failed for reasons that are more sophisticated. First, the GIA encompassed groups that differed in their ideological perspectives, which were difficult to consolidate. The absence of an authoritative religious leadership to hold these different currents together and sort out disputes also contributed to its ultimate failure. Jihadists in Algeria solved their disputes with the liquidation of their rivals and rose to leadership positions through oppression, betrayal, and murder. Al-mukadam argues that the followers of the first leader of the GIA, Abdelhak Layada, ultimately betrayed him. They used the Afghani current to expose his location to the Moroccan authorities to get rid of him.<sup>87</sup> Zitouni, who was selling chickens before he joined the GIA, rose to power in 1994. He represented the Takffiri current, and he started to liquidate those who opposed his strategy or represented other currents, including Mohamed Said and Abderrezak Redjam. Zitouni killed both, because he believed they deviated from the right path by belonging to another current called Algerianization (al-Jazzarh). Some believe that he also killed the leader Abu Abdullah hammed (Cherif Gousmi) in 1994, after accusing him and his deputy of working with the Shiites. Then Zitouni, the most notorious leader of the GIA, met his end at the hands of GIA's dissenters. Kohlmann argues, “[Many Mujahidin] have claimed that they left the GIA due to fear for their own lives and the harsh punishment applied on them.”<sup>88</sup>

The second factor that contributed to GIA failure was the group’s actions against civilians. The Algerian authorities succeeded in changing the course of confrontation

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<sup>87</sup> Mukadam, “the Algerian Afghans,” Issue No. 14133.

<sup>88</sup> Kohlmann, “Two Decades,” 8.

from a government-jihadist war to a civilian-jihadist war. Under the self-protection doctrine, the government gave weapons and ammunition to civilians, so they could protect themselves and their villages. The GIA responded by issuing fatwa that deemed the Algerians infidels and legitimized their killing. Antar Zouabri issued the fatwa, and called it the Great Demarcation (al-mufassala al-kubra). Zouabri's religious advisor declared, "The murder of women and children consorting with 'enemies of Islam' was lawful and that the innocent among them would be admitted to Paradise. His readers were informed that those who had their throats cut in towns and villages were 'supporters of the tyrant' (*taghout*)."<sup>89</sup> Consequently, "There have been nearly 200 massacres, perpetrated with appalling savagery. The victims have all been civilians. Neither women, children nor the elderly have been spared."<sup>90</sup> The confrontations with civilians resulted in nearly 100,000 deaths. Furthermore, the Algerian official report indicates that the total number of women raped by the GIA reached 2048 in two years. In addition, there were 319 women kidnapped with no indication about their status until now (2007).<sup>91</sup> These actions created a discontented sentiment against the jihadists that consequently drained their recruitment source.

The third factor that contributed to the GIA's failure was the shift of its strategy. It abandoned the idea of fighting the near enemy, and embraced a strategy that widened its operations theater to include cross border attacks (the far enemy). In December 1994, the GIA hijacked an Air France jetliner from Boumedienne International Airport in Algiers. Their plan was to plow the plane into Eiffel tower in Paris. French police rescued the hostages and killed the four perpetrators. The failed operation sounded an alarm not only in France, but also in Britain, which the GIA considered its rear base of financial and media support. The GIA escalated its confrontations with the French government in late 1995, when its associates launched four attacks that targeted four subway stations in

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<sup>89</sup> Djamel Benramdane, "Election Shrouded in Confusion: Algeria Accepts the Unacceptable," *Le Monde Diplomatique*, March 1999, <http://mondediplo.com/1999/03/03algeria>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Mukadam, "the Algerian Afghans," Issue No. 14134.

Paris, killing nine French citizens and injuring 160.<sup>92</sup> Several months after the subway attacks, the GIA kidnapped seven French monks. For their liberation, the GIA demanded the French and the Algerian governments release Abdel Haq, the GIA's former leader. When the French government refused the GIA demands, they executed the monks.

The new front, opened by Zitouni with the French, had a negative impact on the organization. It altered the French position regarding its stand against the Algerian government. The French government strongly criticized the Algerian government's measures that cancelled the democratic election and strongly supported the Algerian opposition's initiatives. However, soon after these operations, France turned to the Algerian authorities and lent support to undermine the jihadists' project. The French also exerted pressure on the British government to uncover GIA related cells in the country. Consequently, the GIA lost an important source of support. The French and the British security apparatus launched crackdowns and arrest campaigns that dissolved the GIA associated cells and forced other Islamists to seek refuge elsewhere.

The fourth factor that contributed to the failure of the GIA was the idea that Algerian secret services had penetrated the organization. This subject is debatable in formal circles both inside Algeria and at the international level; however, the jihadists who constituted the body of the GIA, especially those who disagreed with Zitouni and his successor Zouabri, left the organization because of this belief. The unjustifiable killing of individuals who belonged to other currents, as well as the unreasonable killing of the Libyan fighters who came to support the organization, put the group and its leadership in the crosshairs of this charge. Most notably, the civilian massacres, as attributed to a GIA operations were concentrated on villages that were the most supportive of al-mujahedeen. Abu Hamza al-Masri, who supported the GIA from Britain through the *al-Ansar* publication, argues, "No one at the time believed that this could be the work of any Islamic group, even the anti-Muslims themselves, they have all agreed that this is the work of the Algerian government, trying to put people off from Islam and Islamic ideas."<sup>93</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Mukadam, "The Algerian Afghans." issue No.14136.

<sup>93</sup> Kohlmann, "Two Decades," 10.

Al-Suri, in his testimony on the Algerian Jihad, presented five ideas that suggest the involvement of the Algerian secret services in the civilian massacres. They include his personal experience in guerrilla warfare, the testimony of the escaped Libyan fighters, the testimony of the GIA separated groups, the testimony of fighters that al-Suri later met in Afghanistan, and al-Suri's personal investigation, which depended on media reports that included testimonies of Algerian army veterans who fled to Europe and exposed the issue.<sup>94</sup> The evidence that al-Suri provided strongly supported the notion that the Algerian secret services penetrated the GIA to create a gap between the jihadists and their constituencies. In addition, the authorities wanted to present itself to the citizens as the only power capable of providing them security. Accordingly, citizens clung to the state more than to any other party. Furthermore, this policy helped to silence the Islamist's vocal support outside Algeria. Thus, the GIA's European cells, especially those in Britain, halted their media and financial aid after they became suspicious of the GIA's illogical actions. As these actions did not help the Jihadists' cause; instead, they alienated the group's own followers and other sympathizers.

This idea of Algerian infiltration into the GIA has also found support in two French journalists, Romain Icart and Jean-Baptiste Rivoire. Both journalists interviewed Captain Hocine Ouguenoune and other former Algerian secret service members (DCSA) for a documentary film broadcast in 2002. According to the former captain, the Algerian secret service (DRS) recruited Djamel Zitouni, a chicken seller with 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> grade education, as an informant after they caught him in a morally compromising, homosexual situation.<sup>95</sup> The documentary interviewed several other former military personnel who confess DRS penetrated the GIA. The journalists argue, "As [Zitouni] subsequently rose to the head of the GIA in Algeria, the DRS used him to carry out the executions of

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<sup>94</sup> Abu Musab al-Suri, "Mukhtasar Shahadati ala al-Jihad fi al-Jazaer 1988-1996 (Summary of my testimony on the Algerian Jihad 1988-1996)," 60-68, <http://www.archive.org/download/Syri...10/Algeria.pdf>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>95</sup> Romain Icart and Jean-Baptiste Rivoire, "script: Paris attacks: They could prevent," *Algeria-Watch*, [http://www.algeria-watch.org/farticle/sale\\_guerre/documentaire\\_attentats.htm](http://www.algeria-watch.org/farticle/sale_guerre/documentaire_attentats.htm) (accessed October 16, 2010).

Islamists who had joined the GIA and to spread terror through the civilian population. Surrounded by DRS agents, Zitouni and his GIA served the regime goal of securing French support through terrorist attacks.”<sup>96</sup>

Under these circumstances, the GIA, which had unified 95% of the jihadists under its banner, started to fall apart and many of its components left the organization. The GIA was no longer a cohesive militia force. Instead, it dispersed into four main parts. The first part included the Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) and other separatists from the GIA, like the groups of Ail Benhadjar and Mustafa Kertali. Madany Mezraq, the leader of the AIS, led this new group and soon opened a negotiation process with the Algerian authorities for reconciliation.<sup>97</sup> In September 1997, Mezraq announced a truce with the government, and he called all jihadists to halt their armed operations in Algeria. His initiative spurred thousands of armed militias to lay down their weapons and benefit from the government civil concord initiative. Mezraq’s truce communiqué stated that the cease-fire call was an attempt;

To make the enemies of yesterday and today face their responsibilities, to warn the faint-hearted of the harmful consequences of their cowardly behavior. To encourage sincere sons of Algeria who love their country to take the initiative to work together for the return of peace and stability, to bring the country out of its crisis, to foil the plans of those who are waiting for an opportunity to harm Algeria and the Algerians... and to unmask the enemy lurking behind the abominable massacres and isolate the residual criminals of the GIA and those hiding behind them.<sup>98</sup>

The second part included mainly jihadists who represented the Afghani current and other jihadist individuals who distanced themselves from the FIS and AIS. Hassan Hattab, a former GIA’s district leader, led this group. They sought to establish a new organization with a new outlook from the ruins of the GIA. “Mindful of how appallingly the GIA had tarnished its name throughout the Muslim world, Bin Laden allegedly urged Hattab to work with others to establish a rival mujahedeen organization in Algeria and

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<sup>96</sup> Algeria-Watch, “GIA: Armed Islamist Groups Serving the Algerian Sécurité militaire?,” *Algeria-Watch*, March 2003, [http://www.algeria-watch.org/en/aw/gia\\_sm.htm](http://www.algeria-watch.org/en/aw/gia_sm.htm), (accessed October 16, 2010).

<sup>97</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 241.

<sup>98</sup> Martinez Luis, *the Algerian Civil War: 1990–1998*, (New York: Columbia University Press, C. Hurst & Co. Ltd, 2000), 18.

present a ‘better image of the Jihad’ against the secular government.”<sup>99</sup> Accordingly, under the supervision of Bin Laden, who reportedly contacted him over a satellite phone, Hattab established a new organization in 1999 called the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC). The new organization denounced the massacres tied to the old leaders of the GIA, separated itself from them, and called for other jihadists to unify their efforts to fight the regime. “With its new agenda, the group managed to amass hundreds of defectors from both FIS and the GIA; in less than two years, the GSPC grew nearly five times in size—from an estimated 700 to 3,000 active fighters.”<sup>100</sup>

The remaining GIA members who stayed with Zouabri comprised the third part of the jihadist community in Algeria. Authorities and separatists who clashed with Zouabri’s ideologies and behaviors, continued to attack this group. Consequently, their capabilities declined, and according to the 2008 country report on terrorism, its members number less than 40.<sup>101</sup> “The GIA was never officially dissolved, though by 2001, it had become largely defunct, [and] Zouabri was finally killed in a clash with Algerian security forces in the town of Boufarik in February 2002.”<sup>102</sup>

The fourth part of the Algerian jihadists included those who left Algeria and went back to Afghanistan. Abu Musab al-Suri claims members of this group tried to collect themselves and rearrange their papers to restart working in their goals. They formed a group that was struggling in difficult circumstances to revive a jihad in Algeria. The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and the consequences that followed overcame them, so they abandoned their project and took up positions in the battle against the United States invasion. Many of them record their names in the list of martyrs or prisoners, as victims of “September 11<sup>th</sup>’s groove”.<sup>103</sup> In this way, the Algerian-jihadists’ project failed, as the

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<sup>99</sup> Kohlmann, “Two Decades,” 12.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>101</sup> Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism, “Chapter 6: Terrorist Organizations” *Country Reports on Terrorism, U.S. department of state*, April 30, 2008, <http://www.state.gov/s/ct/rls/crt/2007/103714.htm>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>102</sup> Kohlmann, “Two Decades,” 12.

<sup>103</sup> Al-Suri, “Mukhtasar Shahadati,” 19.

military establishment managed to get a grip on the country and defeat the jihadists' attempts to overthrow the government and establish an Islamic state in Algeria.

### **3. Failure of the Egyptian Jihadists**

The strategy that al-Islamiyah adopted brought unexpected consequences and proved destructive to its organization as well as to al-Jihad group. The Islamic revolution approach in Iran had a strong influence on Al-Islamiyah, Their open confrontation with the regime and populist revolutionary approach triggered government crackdowns and harsh response. Al-Suri argues that when the government uncovered one al-jihad cell and found one of its associated army officers, they had launched two arrest waves. Al-Jihad lost more than 1500 of its members in these raids, when the government found most of their names in a confiscated computer that belonged to the group's membership director.<sup>104</sup> As al-jihad was a secret organization comprised of elite and high ranking officers, it was impossible for them to recover from this loss of manpower.

Unsuccessful attacks and the adoption of suicidal techniques were additional factors that contributed to the failure of al-jihad. . In August 1993, the group carried out their first suicide attack against Egyptian interior minister Hasan al-Alfi, but he escaped with only minor injuries. The technique itself triggered a debate over the legality of such actions in Islam; as this practice was exclusive to the Shiites and the Sunni populace had rejected it. Three months after this attack, al-Zawahiri encountered another major failure. The group attempted to liquidate Prime Minister Atef Sidqi. The operation failed, and, instead of killing Sidqi, the attack killed a young schoolgirl, Shayma. The girl's death sparked anger in the Egyptian streets against the jihadists and spurred the government to employ countermeasures that were more aggressive.

Al-Zawahiri's situation worsened as Sudan expelled him after the Mubarak assassination attempt in Addis Ababa and his execution of two Sudanese boys. The two events put the Sudanese under international, regional, and domestic pressure to uncover the perpetrators and expel all jihadists from the country. In addition, the Sudanese

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<sup>104</sup> Al-Suri, *Da'wat al-Moqawmah*, 759–760.

perceived his execution of the two boys, who were Egyptian spies, as a disregard for state sovereignty. Consequently, they ordered him to leave Sudan.

At this stage, al-Zawahiri lost the battle with the Egyptian regime on all fronts. Authorities had arrested or killed most of his organization's members; he failed to gain Egyptian sympathy and support; and he lost his safe haven in Sudan. Accordingly, he called on his followers to cease operations against the Egyptian regime in 1995.<sup>105</sup> In his confession, al-Najjar revealed that, the group (Al-jihad) suffered a great loss of manpower as security forces captured or killed most of their members by the mid-1990s. Moreover, the group could not overcome their funding difficulties during this period, because most of their financial resources went to the families of prisoners and casualties. Al-Zawahiri suspended operations in Egypt, so he could regroup.<sup>106</sup> After 1995, the *Jihad* group did not launch any operations against the regime in Egypt. This indicates that the group failed to achieve its goals at the local level, just like all of the other contemporary Islamic radical groups in the Arab world.

Since the Egyptian's harsh crackdowns were not limited to the al-jihad group, Al-Jemaah al-Islamiyah also suffered a great loss of manpower to imprisonment and death. After al-Zawahiri suspended al-Jihad operations, al-Islamiyah realized the impossibility of overcoming the state might. By the 1997, there were almost 20,000 jihadists in Egyptian prisons, 90 percent of them were members of al-Islamiyah.<sup>107</sup> As a result, al-Islamiyah took the first step toward reconciliation with the regime in July 1997, in what it called "the nonviolence initiative."

The group's leadership took the initiative from their prison cells and a defendant declared their objectives during one of his hearings. In this initiative, the group

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<sup>105</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhawateha*, 185.

<sup>106</sup> Byar Aqel, "Minn Tanziem alJihad ela-Tanziem al-Qaeda (from al-Jihad Organization to al-Qaeda Organization): Full Records of the Investigation with Mr. Ahmed Ibrahim Al-Najjar," *Shafaf al-Sharq al-Awsat*, September 10, 2007, 1 of 6, [http://www.metransparent.com/spip.php?page=article&id\\_article=2072&lang=ar](http://www.metransparent.com/spip.php?page=article&id_article=2072&lang=ar), (accessed October 20, 2010).

<sup>107</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?," *Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, 2, <http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB35.pdf>, (accessed October 18, 2010).

announced an end to all acts of violence in Egypt and abroad.<sup>108</sup> Four months into the initiative, a group of six al-Islamiyah members attacked tourist groups in Luxor and killed 62 people. This incident was a manifestation of the division between those who wanted consolidation and those who promoted violence. With the exception of some minor attacks, al-Islamiyah succeeded in banning violence after 1997. Their initiative was milestone in the group's political approach. It marked the beginning of a new peaceful political phase and was an indication of the end of the Islamic Jihadist project that espoused violence to achieve political ends.

#### **4. Al-Qaeda Failure**

Looking at what al-Qaeda represents today, it seems paradoxical to say that they have failed. However, the empirical evidence shows that during the mid 1990s Bin Laden had not achieved his goals. His financial assets had evaporated, his organization had fallen apart, and, most importantly, he lost his save haven in Sudan. Consequently, he applied for asylum in Britain.

Bin Laden did not achieve any of his goals in the mid-1990s. First, American forces, which he wanted to expel from the Gulf area, have increased their numbers and remain in almost every country in the region. Second, his effort to overthrow the Yemeni regime and establish an Islamic state also failed. President Saleh reached out to the jihadists through dialogue and tribal influence. He also offered jobs and cash. Al-Suri argues that most of those jihadists entered the military at high ranks and some of them became close to Saleh in his guard forces and in his intelligence establishment.<sup>109</sup> Third, the Islamic Military Counsel that Bin Laden established in Sudan failed bring different rival groups together. Most importantly, all of the groups that he supported failed dramatically in their respective countries.

From a financial standpoint, Bin Laden took a significant hit when the Saudi house froze his assets and confiscated his passport. Additionally, he used the resources

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<sup>108</sup> Khalil al-Anani, "Jihadi Revisionism: Will It Save the World?," *Crown Center for Middle East Studies*, 2, <http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB35.pdf>, (accessed October 18, 2010), 2.

<sup>109</sup> Al-Suri, *Da'wat al-Moqawmah*, 799.

that remained to support the Sudanese government. In exchange for a safe existence, he purchased military equipment for their army establishment and helped build up their infrastructure. He also supported other jihadists, paying their salaries and covering their operational expenditures. L'Houssaine Kherchtou, a member of al-Qaeda who testified as a witness in the 2001 trial of the suspected African-U.S. embassies attackers, argued that Bin Laden faced a financial crisis in the years 1994-5. He recalls, "Osama Bin Laden himself he was talking to us and saying that he lost all his money....he reduced the salary of people....When I wanted to go renew my flight licenses...he told me 'just forget it'."<sup>110</sup> Kherchtou also added that the organization could not offer him U.S. \$ 500 to take his wife to a hospital to give birth.<sup>111</sup> The salary shortage prompted some of al-Qaeda members to leave the organization. Al-Fadl, who joined al-Qaeda very early during its establishment phase, serves an example of this point. He stole U.S. \$ 110,000 from Bin Laden and surrendered himself to an American embassy. He then became a significant source of information about al-Qaeda.

At the organization level, the structure of al-Qaeda during this period started to assume a semi-hierarchical shape. It was more like a firm, with Bin Laden as its chairman or administrator than a military organization with a leader at its top. Although the organization had committees like the media committee, the military committee, and the business committee, commands did not always come directly from Bin Laden. The Egyptian's *jihad* within al-Qaeda would disregard Bin Laden and give orders without his permission. Abu Walid al-Masri, the editor of the Arabic Taliban's magazine al-Imarah (the Emirate), argues that Bin Laden's main two figures and former al-Jihad members, Abu Hafs al Masri and Abu Abidah al Bانشجري, sought to acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) without Bin Laden's approval.<sup>112</sup> Due to his lack of experience in military science and leadership, Bin Laden used to send those who sought his guidance to

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<sup>110</sup> Court Reporters Office, "USA v. Usama Bin Laden," *United States District Court: Southern District of New York*, 1281-82, February 22, 2001, <http://cryptome.org/usa-v-ubl-09.htm>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 1283.

<sup>112</sup> Abu Walid al-Masri, "The Story of the Arab Afghans from the Entry to Afghanistan until the Final Departure with the Taliban," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat*, December 8, 2004.

Abu Hafs (Mohammad Atef). Bin Laden's leadership of al-Qaeda looked more like the administration of a corporation than the organization of a militia. Abu Jandal, Bin Laden's former bodyguard, argues that Bin Laden's activities and interests were oriented primarily toward investments and construction work in Sudan.<sup>113</sup>

Additionally, Bin Laden failed to attract those who had fought with him in Afghanistan and could not maintain the membership of some associates. Abu Jandal recalls that Bin Laden sent messages to "al-Qaeda veterans" from Yemen and Saudi Arabia and asked them to join him. According to Abu Jandal, the best reply he received was from those who said "O Abu Abdullah we cannot join you, now we have families and children that needed to be taken care of."<sup>114</sup>

In 1995, Sudan felt pressure at all levels and this affected the al-Qaeda organization. To find relief for the organization, Bin Laden started to ask some of al-Qaeda members to leave. In his testimony in the U.S. court, L'Houssaine Kherchtou recalls that, upon the Sudanese request, Bin Laden told his Libyan members to leave al-Qaeda and leave Sudan. Bin Laden told them "You have to leave, because if you don't leave, you will be responsible for yourselves, and if somebody caught you, I am not responsible."<sup>115</sup> According to Kherchtou, Bin Laden offered them U.S. \$2400 and tickets. The Libyans were very angry with Bin Laden because he could not protect them, so they left al-Qaeda.

By the end of 1995, Bin Laden realized that all jihadist projects were collapsing in the Arab Muslim world. He also knew that he had become an unwelcome person in this world. In addition to his financial crisis, he barely escaped an assassination attempt carried out by the Takffiri current in Sudan. During this period, under pressure from the international community in general and the Arab regimes in particular, Sudan informed Bin Laden and the other jihadists to leave the country. Consequently, Bin Laden contacted his vocal supporter, Khaled al-Fawwaz, in London to find out whether or not

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<sup>113</sup> Al Hamadi, "Inside Al-Qaeda," 21 March 2005, 19.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> Court Reporters Office, "USA v. Usama," 1281.

he could move to Britain. “Michael Howard, who was then Home Secretary, recalls how his aides told him of the asylum request from the Saudi-born militant... we picked up information that Bin Laden was very interested in coming to Britain. It was apparently a serious request.”<sup>116</sup> Britain denied Bin Laden’s unofficial request, and the immigration authorities issued a banning order to prevent Bin Laden from entering the country.

At this point, Bin Laden’s choices were limited; he could choose surrender or confrontation. Abdel Bari Atwan claims that when he was invited to interview Bin Laden in his cave in Afghanistan in 1996, Muhammad Atef told him, that “Bin Laden felt he now faced two clear option [after being expelled from Sudan]: he could return to Saudi Arabia to spend the rest of his life either in detention or under house arrest, or he could begin a full-on military campaign against his enemies, which he would continue until he was captured or killed.”<sup>117</sup>

## **B. AL-QAEDA RISE**

At the request of the Sudanese, Bin Laden flew back to Afghanistan, specifically to Jalalabad, where local warlords welcomed him.<sup>118</sup> During this period, the Taliban was in the last phase of its mission to control the capital Kabul. Some Arab jihadists assisted them, as they saw the Taliban as the most legitimate movement to rule the country. In this context, al-Najjar claimed that Adel Abdul-Bari, the head of the Islamic Jihad’s media committee, issued a report that assessed the movement (Taliban). The report praised the Taliban in all its aspects and described it as a religious Salafist movement led by a group of students.<sup>119</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Daniel McGrory, “The day when Osama Bin Laden applied for asylum – in Britain,” *The Times*, September, 2005, <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/uk/article572559.ece>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

<sup>117</sup> Abdel Bari Atwan, *The secret history of al Qaeda*, (California: University of California Press, 2008), 49.

<sup>118</sup> Steve Coll, *Ghost wars: the secret history of the CIA, Afghanistan, and Bin Laden, from the soviet invasion to September 10, 2001*, (New York: Penguin Group, 2004), 9.

<sup>119</sup> Byar Aqel, “Minn Tanziem alJihad,” September 13, 2007, 2of 6, [http://www.metransparent.com/spip.php?page=article&id\\_article=2098&lang=ar](http://www.metransparent.com/spip.php?page=article&id_article=2098&lang=ar), accessed December 1, 2010).

The Taliban opened its doors to the defeated jihadist from the Muslim world. In return, Bin Laden supported the Taliban with cash and some of Al Qaeda's most committed fighters to help them continue fighting the northern alliances' troops. The Taliban tried to avoid the ideological clashes between the different jihadist groups, as they realized that such a clash might undermined their authority. Therefore, the movement (Taliban) connected with Bin Laden help realize their vision. In addition, they asked Bin Laden to avoid the media, as the movement was still in its building phase and the northern alliance still posed a threat..<sup>120</sup> This request came after Bin Laden wrote several public letters and conducted many international interviews. In one of his letters, Bin Laden "recounts the 'oppression, hostility, and injustice [committed] by the Judeo-Christian' against the Ummah. Bin Laden concludes with a call to arms: 'your enemies are the Israelis and American, Cavalry of Islam, be mounted!'"<sup>121</sup> Riedel argues that he wrote this letter in anger and it was the manifesto declaring war on America.<sup>122</sup> Although, Bin Laden promised Mullah Omar, the Taliban leader, he would comply with his requests, he broke his promise after he became secure in Afghanistan. In the beginning of 1998, Bin Laden collected 40 signatures from Taliban scholars and the Pakistani that supported his earlier communiqués. He once again espoused the legitimacy of expelling American forces from the holy lands in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>123</sup>

In February 1998, Bin Laden announced the formation of the new organization: the World Islamic Front for Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders (al-Jbhh al-Slamy al-Almyh Lqtal al-Yhwd Walşlybyyn).<sup>124</sup> From then until September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, Bin Laden spoke of enmity against the United States and released several communiqués that indicated he was planning something against American interests. He put these plans into action on August 7 1998, by bombing of American embassies in Dar-es-salaam and

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<sup>120</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 284–285.

<sup>121</sup> Riedel, *the Search for al-Qaeda*, 57–58.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid., 57.

<sup>123</sup> Atwan, *The Secret History*, 54.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

Nairobi. The bombings marked a dramatic course change in the jihadist's goals. Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri, with some Pakistani and Bangladeshi militants under the World Islamic Front, initiated the war "against the far enemy".

The attack prompted the U.S. administration to retaliate with Cruise missile strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan. Both strikes were unsuccessful. The media exploited the situation and protest-marches against the U.S. response occurred almost in every Muslim country. Bin Laden's prior experience with the jihadists during the war against the Soviets and his current experience with the American response helped him formulate his next strategy. He intended to drag the United States into an aggressive war of retaliation that would force all jihadists join the fight, either willingly or unwillingly. Bin Laden's goals became very clear; he wanted to fight the far enemy instead of the near enemy. He realized that fighting any regime on a national basis was doomed to fail; he learned this lesson from earlier jihadist' failures. Moreover, Bin Laden recognized the causes of the earlier failures; the United States supported the regimes, so it would be more effective to fight the "puppeteers instead of the puppets" or the snake's head instead of its many tails. Al-Bahri recalled incidents when al-Qaeda members asked Bin Laden's permission to carry out operations against their regimes, Bin Laden responded "leave them alone and do not preoccupy yourselves with them. They are scum....when they witness the defeat of the United States, they will be in their worst situations."<sup>125</sup>

The period from 1998 to September 11 was most critical for al-Qaeda and other jihadists. This period reshaped the jihadists' map (Table 3), redefined alliances between some groups and led to disassociation between others. From 1998 to 2001, Bin Laden successfully attacked three American targets: the American embassies in Dar-Es-Salaam and Nairobi, the U.S. Navy destroyer USS Cole in Yemen, and on September 11<sup>th</sup>, Bin Laden shocked the globe when his followers hijacked civilian planes, attacked the World Trade Center, and killed more than three thousand people.

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<sup>125</sup> Fawaz, *the Far Enemy*, 145.

## 1. The Jihadists' Response to Bin Laden's Escalations

It is very important to shed light on how other Islamic groups in the Islamic world reacted to Bin Laden's speeches and actions. With the exception of the al-jihad group, no group agreed with or encouraged Bin Laden's escalations. Even the Taliban, at some point, asked Bin Laden to halt his media speeches.<sup>126</sup> On September 13, 1998, an American official met with Taliban official Adul Hakim Mujahid. During this meeting, Mujahid informed the U.S. official that 80 percent of Taliban opposed Bin Laden's presence in Afghanistan, and he advised the U.S. administration to be patient with Bin Laden's issues.<sup>127</sup> He also told the U.S. official that the Taliban warned Bin Laden to avoid political and press activities and confiscated his communications assets.<sup>128</sup> Kenneth Katzman argues, "Since the August 1998 U.S. retaliatory strikes on the Afghan camps and the Sudan pharmaceutical plant, the Taliban leadership has tried to dissociate itself from Bin Laden by asserting that he is no longer its guest."<sup>129</sup>

After Bin Laden's announcement about the establishment of the World Islamic Front, he sent delegations to convince other jihadist groups to join him, but none agreed. Benotman, a key leader in the LIDFG, recalled that when Bin Laden's delegation proposed an alliance with the new organization (World Islamic Front), we refused and said, "That Bin Laden's project does not comply with our goals and such projects will never succeed."<sup>130</sup> Like other jihadists, "The LIFG's members preferred to ally themselves with Mullah Omar and the Taliban who were giving them protection rather than with Bin Laden and Zawahiri, whom they accused of trying to create a state within a state in Afghanistan."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>126</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 285.

<sup>127</sup> Bergin, the *Osama Bin Laden*, 232.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Kenneth Katzman, Terrorism: Near Eastern Groups and State Sponsors, 2001, *Congressional Research Service*, , September 10, 2001), 11, <http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB55/crs20010910.pdf>, (accessed November 10, 2010).

<sup>130</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 291.

<sup>131</sup> Pargeter, "LIFG."

Al-Zarqawi is another good example of someone who disagreed with Bin Laden's project. Al-Zarqawi, who formed al-Tawhid wal-Jihad group in Afghanistan after his release from prison in Jordan, refused to join Bin Laden's project. Bootie argues, "Though [Al-Zarqawi] met with Bin Laden in Afghanistan several times, [he] never joined al Qaeda. Militants have explained that Tawhid was 'especially for Jordanians who did not want to join al Qaeda.' A confessed Tawhid member even told his interrogators that Zarqawi was 'against al Qaeda'." <sup>132</sup>

Abu Jandal, who joined al-Qaeda in late 1996 and later became Bin Laden's personal guard, argues that when Sheikh Osamas declared the war against the Americans there was nobody with him except the remaining of the Egyptian fighters and some Algerians. There was nobody with him from Yemen or the Arabian Peninsula. They used to call us "the founders," because we were the first group to join him and we were 17 fighters. <sup>133</sup>

After the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, most of the jihadists returned to their home countries with an agenda to overthrow the apostates and establish Islamic states that recognized *Sharia* law. However, the jihadists had failed to achieve this goal through violent means. The regimes retained control and brought the jihadist groups to their knees. Even Bin Laden's organization almost languished during the mid 1990s under the pressure of the Muslim regimes in Sudan.

Bin Laden realized the impossibility of winning the battle against the regimes in the Muslim countries. He realized that he could overcome the lack of compatibility between different groups; the disagreements among the jihadists within the same organization or within the same country's groups over authority and minor doctrine; and the inability to mobilize the Muslim populace, by redirecting the confrontation to the far

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<sup>132</sup> Bootie Cosgrove-Mather, "Who Is Abu Zarqawi? What We Know about the Terrorist Leader Who Murdered Nick Berg," *CBS News*, May 18, 2004, <http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2004/05/18/opinion/main618114.shtml> (accessed November 4, 2010).

<sup>133</sup> Khalid al-Hamadi, "Bin Laden's bodyguard interviewed on al-Qaeda strategies," *alQuds alArabi*, sec. global and Arabic affaires, August 3, 2004, <http://alquds.co.uk/index.asp?code=qfi>, (accessed October 18, 2010).

enemy instead of the near one. With exception of part of an al-*Jihad* group, represented by al-Zawahiri, and Refai Taha from al-Islamiyah, Bin Laden failed to attract any of other jihadist groups to this strategy.

Furthermore, other jihadists and some members of al-Qaeda itself disapproved of his project to confront the United States. However, “Bin Laden never listened to the warnings voiced by both the “hawks” and the “doves” within the organization that the United States would be a ‘ruthless rival’ that should not be underestimated in a military struggle.”<sup>134</sup> Benotman argues that al-Suri, an important theological figure in al-Qaeda, hated Bin Laden’s leadership, and he used to call him “dictator and he even called him Pharaoh”.<sup>135</sup> Arguably, Bin Laden was aware of American retaliation. He planned to drag the United States into a war that would unleash Islamic anger, mobilize the Islamic public, and unify jihadist groups. The next chapter will examine this hypothesis by looking into the new al-Qaeda organization.

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<sup>134</sup> Fawaz, *the Far Enemy*, 127.

<sup>135</sup> Bergin, *the Osama Bin Laden*, 247.

Table 3. Jihadist Map up Until 9/11 Attacks

Organization Name	Leadership	Goals	Component
The World Islamic front for Jihad against the Jews and Crusaders and later Qaedat alJihad	Bin Laden and al-Zawahiri	Fighting the American existents in the holy lands	1. Al-Qaeda organization 2. Egyptian Islamic jihad group
Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyah	Omar Abdel-Rahman	Advocating political reforms with peaceful means after 1997 reconciliation	Peasants, uneducated members, and typical citizens
Salafist Group for Preaching (prying) and Combat (Al-Jamaah al-Salafiyyah li-al-Dawah wal Qital)	Hassan Hattab	“Fighting in jihad against the Algerian regime and its masters among the Jews and Christians [in order] to restore the Caliphate.” <sup>136</sup> The group avoided civilian killing.	1. Defectors from the Islamic salvation front (FIS). 2. Defectors from the (GIA). 3. About 3000 fighters by the 1999.
Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG), Al-Jama'a al-Islamiyyah al-Muqatilah bi-Libya	Abdul Hakim al-Khuwailidi (Abu Abdullah al-Sadiq)	Supporting Taliban movement and Reorganizing itself to fight the apostate regime in Libya.	The remaining of the LIFG group who managed to escape the Libyan forces crackdowns
Jamaat al-Tawhid wa'l-Jihad (monotheism and Jihad Group)	Abu Musab al-Zarqawi	Overthrow the kingdom of Jordan and fight the Israeli occupation to free Palestine	1. Jordanian afghan veterans 2. Syrians 3. Palestinians
The Moroccan Islamic Combatant Group (GICM)	Abu Abdullah al-Sharif	Establishing an Islamic state in Morocco, and later supporting al-Qaeda	1. Moroccan Diaspora communities 2. Moroccan Afghan veterans 3. Shabiba Islamiya members
Tunisian Combatant Group (TCG)	Tarek Maaroufi	Seeks to establish an Islamic regime in Tunisia	1. Tunisian diasporas in Europe and elsewhere 2. Tunisian afghan veterans 3. Members of the Tunisian Islamist movement, (an-Nahda)

<sup>136</sup> Kohlmann, “Two Decades,” 12.

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## **IV. AL-QAEDA SINCE 9/11: 2001–2010**

Chapter III discussed the demise of the jihadists on a national level. This chapter examines how the war on terrorism came to serve Bin Laden. First, it unified terrorist groups against the far enemy, and diverted their focus from the apostate regimes at the national level. Second, the war, perceived as a crusade, unified and mobilized the Islamic populace in support of Bin Laden's cause. Third and most importantly, it caused a change in the organizational structure of Al Qaeda, which shifted from a hierarchical, isolated organization to horizontally decentralized and diffused groups. The organization now includes affiliates and aspirants who seek to attain the status of al-Qaeda's brand of terrorism.

### **A. THE WAR ON TERRORISM**

Nine days after the 9/11 attack, President Bush addressed Congress. In his September 20 speech, the president declared the war on terrorism. He said, "Our war on terror begins with al-Qaeda, but it does not end there. It will not end until every terrorist group of global reach has been found, stopped, and defeated."<sup>137</sup> This declaration came from a place of anger as President Bush stated, "Our grief has turned to anger and anger to resolution."<sup>138</sup> Apparently, the war was a retaliatory reaction sought to alleviate citizen frustration more than it was a planned strategy to eliminate terrorism. The administration dealt with 9/11 perpetrators in the same way that they dealt with Pearl Harbor's attackers in 1941. Accordingly, a military response to 9/11 was the administration's first choice.

During that speech, President Bush demanded that the Taliban:

Deliver to United States authorities all the leaders of al Qaeda who hide in your land. Release all foreign nationals, including American citizens, you have unjustly imprisoned. Protect foreign journalists, diplomats, and aid workers in your country. Close immediately and permanently every terrorist training camp in Afghanistan, and hand over every terrorist, and

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<sup>137</sup> CNN, "Transcript of President Bush's address to a joint session of Congress on Thursday night, *CNN.com*, September 20, 2001," September 21, 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

every person in their support structure, to appropriate authorities. Give the United States full access to terrorist training camps, so we can make sure they are no longer operating. These demands are not open to negotiation or discussion. The Taliban must act, and act immediately. They will hand over the terrorists, or they will share in their fate.<sup>139</sup>

Although the Taliban was hosting Bin Laden, 80 percent of the Taliban government opposed his existence before 9/11. Benotman, a leader of the LIFG who attended the meetings held in Afghanistan between Bin Laden and other jihadist groups' representatives during the year 2000, claimed that the Taliban warned the United States through its Mulla Jalil about a future attack by al-Qaeda against them.<sup>140</sup> This indicates that the movement was fully cooperating with the U.S administration.

Even after 9/11, the Taliban was not principally against handling Bin Laden, but they were against the manner in which the U.S. ordered them to do so. The movement's leadership realized that handling Bin Laden without sufficient evidence to justify their actions would instigate conflict between them and Islamists. Therefore, they asked the United States to disclose any evidence that suggested the involvement of Bin Laden in the 9/11 attacks, and upon that they would hand Bin Laden over to a third party for a fair trial. Former CIA station chief Milt Bearden argues that he had no doubt about the intention of the Taliban to get rid of Bin Laden, but he claims, "We [the United States] never heard what they were trying to say....We had no common language. Ours was, 'Give up Bin Laden.' They were saying, 'Do something to help us give him up.'"<sup>141</sup>

Consequently, U.S troops deployed to southern and central Asian bases. The mission was not limited to neutralizing al-Qaeda. It was also to destroy the Taliban movement and all jihadists in Afghanistan. On October 7, 2001, the United States started

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<sup>139</sup> CNN, "Transcript of President Bush's address to a joint session of Congress on Thursday night, *CNN.com*, September 20, 2001," September 21, 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/20/gen.bush.transcript/>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>140</sup> Camille Altaweel, "al-Qaeda had Sought to Acquire Weapons of Mass Destruction to Prevent the strikes against Afghanistan and Bin Laden was Betting on the American cowardly," *Dar Al Hayat*, September 25, 2010, <http://www.daralhayat.com/portalarticlendam/184524>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>141</sup> David Ottaway and Joe Stephens, "Diplomats Met with Taliban on Bin Laden: Some Contend U.S. Missed Its Chance, *the Washington Post*, October 29, 2001, [http://www.infowars.com/saved%20pages/Prior\\_Knowledge/US\\_met\\_taliban.htm](http://www.infowars.com/saved%20pages/Prior_Knowledge/US_met_taliban.htm), (accessed December 1, 2010).

its air campaign against Afghanistan. Within days, the northern alliance, backed by the international forces, ousted Taliban and brought the capital under control. Although, Operation Enduring Freedom succeeded in overthrowing the Taliban regime, killing hundreds of al-Qaeda operatives, and capturing hundreds more, it did not end terrorism. On the contrary, al-Qaeda still exists today, and it poses a more significant threat than it did before 9/11.

The total war approach and the collective punishment strategy adopted by the administration came to serve Bin Laden more than it hurt him. First, the invasion changed the nature of al-Qaeda narrations and fostered its theological justifications to pursue Jihad. Before the invasion, al-Qaeda justified its attacks with an Islamic doctrine called offensive jihad (Jihad al-Talab). This doctrine legalizes an offensive war against an [infidel] country when it poses a direct threat to a Muslim country. However, this doctrine has a very limited capability to mobilize the Islamic populace for a variety of reasons. First, it constitutes one of the most debatable issues in Islam; hence, there is a division over its interpretation. Few interpreted it in the same way that Bin Laden did. Second, according to this doctrine, Jihad becomes *Fard Kifaya*; this means if a group of Muslims undertakes Jihad, the obligation falls on others.

The invasion gave Bin Laden the opportunity to create a new narration based on one of the most settled doctrines in Islam: defensive Jihad (*Jihad al-Dafe'a*). This doctrine specifies that Muslims must defend any Islamic territories attacked by [infidels]. In this case, pursuing Jihad becomes *Fard Ayn*; which means every single Muslim should pursue Jihad by himself, even without the permission of their family or rulers. Two months after the invasion of Afghanistan, Bin Laden had conveyed a message to Muslim youth that incited them to participate in Jihad against the United States of America. In that letter, he said, “the Jihad has become an obligation upon each and every Muslim. We advise the Muslim youth not to fall victim to the words of some *Ulema* who are misleading the *Umma* by stating that Jihad is still a communal duty [Fard kifaya].”<sup>142</sup>

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<sup>142</sup> Raymond Ibrahim, *the Al Qaeda reader*, (New York: Broadway Books, 2007), 268.

Second, the U.S. approach forced those who opposed Bin Laden to participate in the war, either willingly, in the defense of a Muslim country or unwillingly, in self-defense. Third, the war on the Taliban fulfilled the prophecy of Abu Hafs al-Masri, al-Qaeda's third in command. He professed that the United States would use the mujahidin in Afghanistan as an excuse to invade the country and secure its oil interests. In 1996, Abu Hafs reported about the Taliban movement, its components, capabilities, weaknesses, and its future challenges. According to Abu Hafs, the United States wanted to take control of Afghanistan to secure the oil and gas movement from the Caspian Sea to the warm water in the Arabian Sea through Afghanistan. This would keep Iran from transporting the oil through its territories, and Americans would contract a U.S. \$ 5 billion project.<sup>143</sup> Al-Qaeda used this narration to delegitimize the counterterrorism regimes and attract more recruits from the Muslim world.

Finally, the war approach distorted the efforts to eliminate al-Qaeda. Therefore, instead of only tens of al-Qaeda operators, the war put several hundreds other jihadists, whose goals were very different from al-Qaeda, thousands of the Taliban and their Pashtu supporters, and a great number of sympathizers into the enemy trenches. Abu Jandal argues, "America has primarily served Sheikh Osama Bin Laden and Al-Qaeda Organization. When Sheikh Osama attacked America, he wanted to expose it to the Islamic world. He also sought to expose its evil. This is what really happened."<sup>144</sup>

Two years later, the United States troops invaded Iraq as a continuation of the global war on terrorism. They accused Saddam Hussein of having relations with Bin Laden, and warned that he might transfer his weapons of mass destruction to al-Qaeda. The war fulfilled Bin Laden's 1998 prophecy "that the United States had long intended to destroy Iraq, the most powerful Arab state."<sup>145</sup> More importantly, the war disrupted coalition efforts to destroy al-Qaeda in Afghanistan and provided Bin Laden with an excellent opportunity for relief. Graham Allison argues, "In the war on terrorism the U.S. government has had great difficulty staying strategically focused. After a strong start the

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<sup>143</sup> Bergin, *the Osama Bin Laden*, 237.

<sup>144</sup> Al Hamadi, "Inside Al-Qaeda," March 26, 2005, 17.

<sup>145</sup> Daniel, *the Five Front War*, 10.

diversion...[to the] war in Iraq sucked much of the drive out of the war on terrorism and blurred the targets.”<sup>146</sup> This diversion gave Bin Laden and the Taliban movement the time and space they needed to reorganize, consolidate with other groups in Afghanistan, and start launching attacks against the international forces. Additionally, the Iraq invasion sparked the Islamic populace, especially after the administration failed to provide evidence of Iraq’s WMD’s or its relation to al-Qaeda. Thousands of zealous young Muslims rushed to take a stand and defend a Muslim country.

## **B. AL-QAEDA ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AFTER THE WAR ON TERRORISM**

From one perspective, the war on terrorism, manifested in the extensive use of military force in two lengthy wars, has achieved some success. The 2007 Congress Report Service enumerates many achievements. These include the death or capture of more than 2/3 of al Qaeda’s top leadership, the confiscation of over \$200 million in terrorist resources, the capture of key terrorists in the two war zones, the death or capture of hundreds of insurgents, and the disruption of al Qaeda terrorist plots to infiltrate the United States.<sup>147</sup>

On the other hand, U.S. military operations have also helped Bin Laden. First, operations unintentionally unified terrorist organizations. Most of the jihadist organizations shifted their goals from fighting the near enemy (their apostate regimes) to fighting the far enemy (the United States and its western allies). Bin Laden had pursued this goal for long time during the mid-1990s, but never achieved it. This unification came from the American retaliatory response that arbitrarily placed all jihadist organizations into a single enemy category.

Second, the war served al-Qaeda by expanding its horizontal structure. It became a global movement, commanded by one exclusive ideology, instead of an isolated

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<sup>146</sup> Graham Allison, *Nuclear Terrorism, the Ultimate Preventable Catastrophe*, (New York: Henry Holt Company, LLC., 2004), 179.

<sup>147</sup> Raphael Perl, “Combating Terrorism: The Challenge of Measuring Effectiveness,” *Congressional Research Services*, March 12, 2007, 4, <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/terror/RL33160.pdf>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

organization commanded by one person. Bin Laden himself became more of a symbolic figure than a physical leader of the group. Therefore, his death will not end terrorism. On the contrary, his death will make him hero to Islamists, and his death will be a catalyst for jihad. The organization is now loosely structured and decentralized, which makes it more difficult to detect and to defeat. This maximizes their movement capability and their ability to pose a direct threat to the U.S interests. It also maximizes their resilience and their capacity to minimize the effectiveness of U.S. military operations. “In an August 2009 speech, the Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism stated, ‘Al Qaeda has proven to be adaptive and highly resilient and remains the most serious terrorist threat we face as a nation’.”<sup>148</sup> Al-Qaeda is currently a diffuse global network, composed of three main segments, each with varying degrees of independence. These are the mergers, the affiliations, and the aspirants (Figure 4).

### **1. Al-Qaeda Mergers**

In the wake of 9/11, President Bush left no place for neutrality; he declared, “Either you are with us or you are with the terrorists.”<sup>149</sup> Unfortunately, his rhetoric left jihadists with no choice. They joined Bin Laden’s organization. Most of the groups that fought with Bin Laden in Afghanistan during 1980s and then travelled with him to Sudan during the mid1990s reconnected with al-Qaeda after the United States invaded of Afghanistan.

Within several years, Bin Laden attracted these groups. Consequently, they pledged allegiance and obedience to Bin Laden This meant that they carried out his orders, sought guidance from him, and supplied the organization with information, money, and personnel. More importantly, these groups placed Bin Laden’s goals and objectives above their own. Mergers with al-Qaeda signal the highest possible commitment to the terrorist network and are best represented by al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) or (Qa’idat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn), al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP).

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<sup>148</sup> Rollins, “Al Qaeda and Affiliates,” 1.

<sup>149</sup> CNN, “Transcript of President.”

a. ***Organization of Jihad's Base in the Country of the Two Rivers (AQI)***

*Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn* is the name taken by Zarqawi's jihadist group, Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad, after it merged with al-Qaeda in October 2004. Although al-Zarqawi met with Bin Laden in Afghanistan several times, he was not interested in joining with al-Qaeda. Bin Laden sent al-Zarqawi several messages inviting him to the *Bay'at* while they were in Afghanistan, but al-Zarqawi refused. Bin Laden and al-Zarqawi differed in several ways. First, their goals were different. Bin Laden wanted to fight far enemy and al-Zarqawi wanted to fight the near enemy. Second, Bin Laden is a moderate compared to al-Zarqawi; especially when dealing with the Shiite. "Bin Laden prides himself on being a unifying figure and has made tactical alliances with Shiite groups, meeting several times with Shiite militants."<sup>150</sup> "Zarqawi, by contrast, favors butchering Shiites, calling them 'the most evil of mankind . . . the lurking snake, the crafty and malicious scorpion, the spying enemy, and the penetrating venom'."<sup>151</sup> Third, after the invasion of Afghanistan, the jihadists, including al-Qaeda, and their hosts, the Taliban, suffered great losses of manpower, safe havens, resources, and organizational coherence. Al-Zarqawi left Afghanistan for northern Iraq to pursue his own agenda and fight the near enemy. Had they had good relations, al-Zarqawi would not have left Afghanistan.

In February 2003, al-Zarqawi grabbed the world's attention when Secretary of State Colin Powell accused him of collaborating with Bin Laden. Powell also claimed that Saddam's secret forces had infiltrated al-Zarqawi's organization.<sup>152</sup> In March 2003, the United States led the invasion to topple Saddam's regime in a continuation of the war on terrorism. The invasion fulfilled Bin Laden's 2002 prophecy,

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<sup>150</sup> Cosgrove-Mather, "Who Is Abu Zarqawi."

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> CNN, "Transcript of Powell's U.N. presentation, Part 9: Ties to al Qaeda," *CNN.com*, February 6, 2003, <http://www.cnn.com/2003/US/02/05/sprj.irq.powell.transcript.09/index.html>, (accessed October 20, 2010).

which warned the Iraqis and the Muslims about a military campaign against Iraq.<sup>153</sup> Therefore, thousands of mujahidin, inspired by Bin Laden's words, entered Iraq to defend the Muslim country against the invasion.

The Iraqi war distracted the United States from its efforts in Afghanistan. This gave al-Qaeda some breathing room and a chance to regroup. Instead of focusing on al-Qaeda in Afghanistan, the United States opened a new front in Iraq. Consequently, this action produced a new outlook for terrorists and offered a new safe haven for al-Qaeda. The security vacuum created by the dissolution of the Iraqi police and armed forces gave Zarqawi and other terrorist groups the environment to build formidable terrorist organizations. According to the 2006 International Crisis Group report, by 2005, there were 13 active terrorist groups in Iraq, and those groups comprised more than 50 brigades and battalions with an average of 100 to 300 individual for each brigade.<sup>154</sup>

The failure to identify the real ideology, goals, and relations between al-Qaeda and al-Zarqawi led the U.S. to consider him a direct threat. However, the U.S. could have neutralized al-Zarqawi had they comprehended the fact that he had a poor relationship with Saddam's regime and with al-Qaeda.

Soon after the invasion, al-Zarqawi became a famous terrorist figure credited with 30 percent of the attacks in Iraq. His charisma, brutality, and fame attracted foreign fighters to his organization. While fighting the U.S led invasion, al-Zarqawi adopted two main strategies. First, he targeted the international symbols and nongovernmental organizations to isolate the United States from its international support. The Madrid bombing, London subway bombing, and bombing at the United Nations headquarters in Iraq were all elements of this strategy. Second, he aggravated a sectarian civil war between the Shiite and Sunnis to create a domestic turmoil by indiscriminately

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<sup>153</sup> Riedel, *the Search for al-Qaeda*, 88.

<sup>154</sup> International Crisis Group, "In Their Own Words: Reading the Iraqi Insurgency," *crisisgroup.org: Amman and Brussels*, February 15, 2006, 1–4, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/Middle%20East%20North%20Africa/Iraq%20Syria%20Lebanon/Iraq/In%20Their%20Own%20Words%20Reading%20the%20Iraqi%20Insurgency.ashx>, (accessed November 30, 2010).

attacking Shiite clerks, civilians, and shrines. The killing Ayatollah Mohammad Baqir al-Hakim, as well as the bombing Shiite holy places in Najaf, Karbala, and Samarra are clear examples of this strategy.

To gain more support and sympathy, al-Zarqawi reframed his ultimate goal. He maintained his principle goal, which was to fight the regime in Jordan and guarantee a supply of recruits from both Jordan and Palestine. However, he added a new dimension based on Iraqi nationalism and sectarianism to attract recruits from the Sunni-Iraqi population and give his group an Iraqi face. Finally, he allied himself with al-Qaeda to draw recruits from those jihadists who infiltrated Iraq. In October 2004, al-Zarqawi announced his alliance with al-Qaeda and changed the name of his group from Jama'at al-Tawhid wal-Jihad to *Tanzim Qaidat al-Jihad fi Bilad al-Rafidayn* (QJBR) or Organization of Jihad's Base in the Country of the Two Rivers. Bin Laden blessed this alliance, and in return, he appointed al-Zarqawi the prince (Amir) of the al-Qaeda branch in Iraq and the neighboring counties, including Turkey.

The new organization became a rally point for foreign jihadists, who became very dependent on al-Zarqawi's network. Al-Zarqawi offered those who came to perform their compulsory duty of Jihad safe houses, weapons, explosives, and guidance in a country with which they were not familiar. Although an American air strike killed al-Zarqawi in mid-2006, his death did not affect the organization in terms of its monthly rate of attacks. The rate of attacks kept increasing for the next two years. Additionally, the death of al-Zarqawi seemed to enhance the relationships among different jihadists, and accordingly, unified most of the Islamic factions under the banner of the Islamic State of Iraq with al-Qaeda at its core. Although there is no clear study that compiles data about al-Qaeda attacks in Iraq, one cannot overlook the rate of violence in Iraq and the numbers of fatalities, casualties, and displacements. These rates suggest that the war approach is not the proper response to eliminate terrorism. The heavy usage of air strikes against targets has killed thousands of civilians and triggered anti-American resentments and a desire for revenge. In other words, the war created an environment that is most suitable for terrorism recruitment.

***b. Al-Qaeda Organization in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM)***

Hassan Hattab, leader of the most notorious Algerian terrorist group, the Salafist Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), responded to the 9/11 attack with criticism and a denial of Bin Laden's involvement. Kameel al-Taweel argues that neglecting Hattab's criticism of the attacks and putting his organization on the terror list led to his ousting and replacement with more radical leader.<sup>155</sup> Hattab's successor, Nabil Sahrawi (a.k.a. Abu Ibrahim Mustafa), issued an important video in May 2004 in which he condemned the war on terrorism:

Here, we have evil America declaring a crusade and preparing the troops of the infidels to attack Islam everywhere. President Bush and many high officials clearly and loudly declared that this is a religious war under the banner of the cross. The goal of this war, which they called a 'war on terrorism' and 'war against evil' and other names, is to keep Islam and the Muslims from establishing the Country of Islam that would rule people with the book of Allah and His prophet.<sup>156</sup>

Evan F. Kohlmann argues that the sweeping war on terrorism sparked a wave of anger across the Muslim world, and the GSPC openly "adopted a role within a larger, transnational jihad against America".<sup>157</sup> In September 2005, Sahrawi's successor, Abdelmalik Dourkdal released a communiqué promoting and legitimatizing violent actions against the United States of America: "The world war between Muslims and Christians has already begun... the leader of the infidels, Bush, has clearly declared this war three times to be a crusader war."<sup>158</sup>

After establishing contact with al-Qaeda and specifically with al-Zarqawi, Dourkdal agreed to merge under the banner of al-Qaeda and pay Bin Laden *al Bay'at*. On January 24, 2007, Dourkdal, with the blessing of Bin Laden, changed the name of his group from the Algerian Salafist Group for Prayer and Combat to the organization of Al-Qaeda in Islamic Maghreb (AQIM). After the establishment of the new alliance, the

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<sup>155</sup> Altaweel, *al-Qaida wa-Akhwateha*, 369.

<sup>156</sup> Kohlmann, "Two Decades," 14.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid, 16.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid, 16.

group carried out bloody attacks against selected targets that represented mainly American interests. Interestingly, before 9/11, the group did not target any Americans in Algeria. Although they killed and kidnapped hundreds of foreigners, not one was American. The first attack that manifested their alliance with al-Qaeda targeted a bus carrying employees of a U.S. Oil company. The attack killed one person and wounded nine others, most of them Western (British, American, and Canadian).<sup>159</sup> Then a suicide bomber representing the group attacked the United Nations' headquarters (UN) in Algeria and killed about 40 people depicting al-Qaeda attack against the UN's headquarters in Iraq. Figure 1 shows how the rate of attacks against western targets increased after the group merged with al-Qaeda.

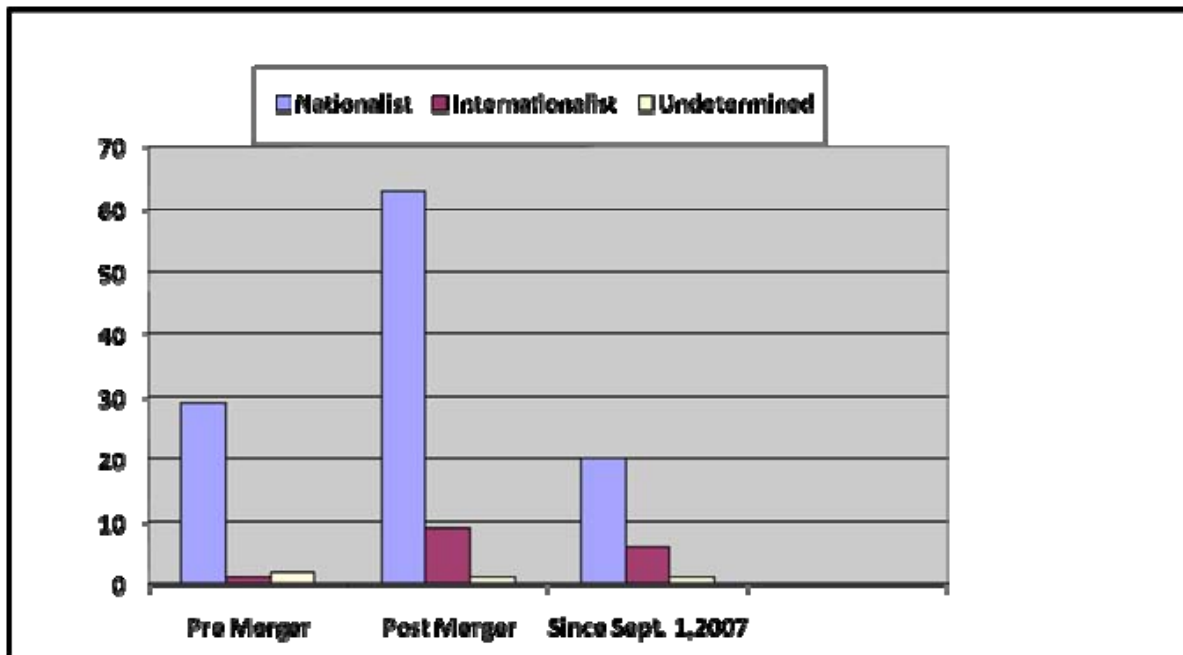


Figure 1. Number of Successful Attacks by the GSPC and AQIM from January 2006 through March 2008<sup>160</sup>

The failure to consider the rivalry between al-Qaeda and the leadership of the Algerian jihadists during the 1990s by launching a total war on terrorism enhanced the jihadists' relationship and shifted the nature of their goals. As a result, the group that

<sup>159</sup> Kohlmann, "Two Decades," 49.

<sup>160</sup> Andrew Black, "AQIM's Expanding Internationalist Agenda," *CTC Sentinel*, April 2008, 13, Issue 5, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/sentinel/CTCSentinel-Vol1Iss5.pdf>, (accessed November 5, 2010).

once struggled to connect with other regional groups became more attractive to jihadists in North Africa. The AQIM sought to establish connections with other North African terrorist groups in Tunisia, Morocco, Libya, and Mauritania. In April 2006, Ambassador Henry A. Crumpton testified that “the once Algeria-centric GSPC...has become a regional terrorist organization, recruiting and operating all throughout the Mahgreb—and beyond to Europe.”<sup>161</sup>

After the declaration of the war on terrorism, the group shifted its priorities from fighting the near enemy to fighting the far enemy, as the far enemy threatened all groups with the same fate as al-Qaeda. Dourkdal explained this dramatic shift in the group’s goals as a reaction to U.S. policy in the global war on terrorism. He said, “We found ourselves on the blacklist of the U.S. administration, tagged with terrorism. Then we found America building military bases in the south of our country, and conducting military exercises.”<sup>162</sup> Accordingly, the organization goals became the same as al-Qaeda the mother as declared by the new organization leader Dourkdal.<sup>163</sup> Figure 2 illustrates that the rate of rhetoric referring to the United States and the Jews increased after the alliance.

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<sup>161</sup> *Islamist Extremism in Europe, Counterterrorism Senate Committee on Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs*, 5-6, (Ambassador Henry Crumpton; Coordinator for Counterterrorism Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, Subcommittee on European Affairs, April 5, 2006), <http://foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/CrumptonTestimony060405.pdf>, (accessed December 1 2010).

<sup>162</sup> Souad Mekhennet and others, “A Threat Renewed: Ragtag Insurgency Gains a Lifeline from Al Qaeda,” *the New York Times*, July 1, 2008, sec. world: Africa, 4, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/07/01/world/africa/01algeria.html?pagewanted=1&r=2&sq=ragtag&st=cse&scp=1#>, (accessed November 4, 2010).

<sup>163</sup> Andrew Hansen, “Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM),” *Council on foreign relations*, July 21, 2009, [http://www.cfr.org/publication/12717/alqaeda\\_in\\_the\\_islamic\\_maghreb\\_aqim.html](http://www.cfr.org/publication/12717/alqaeda_in_the_islamic_maghreb_aqim.html), (accessed November 4, 2010).

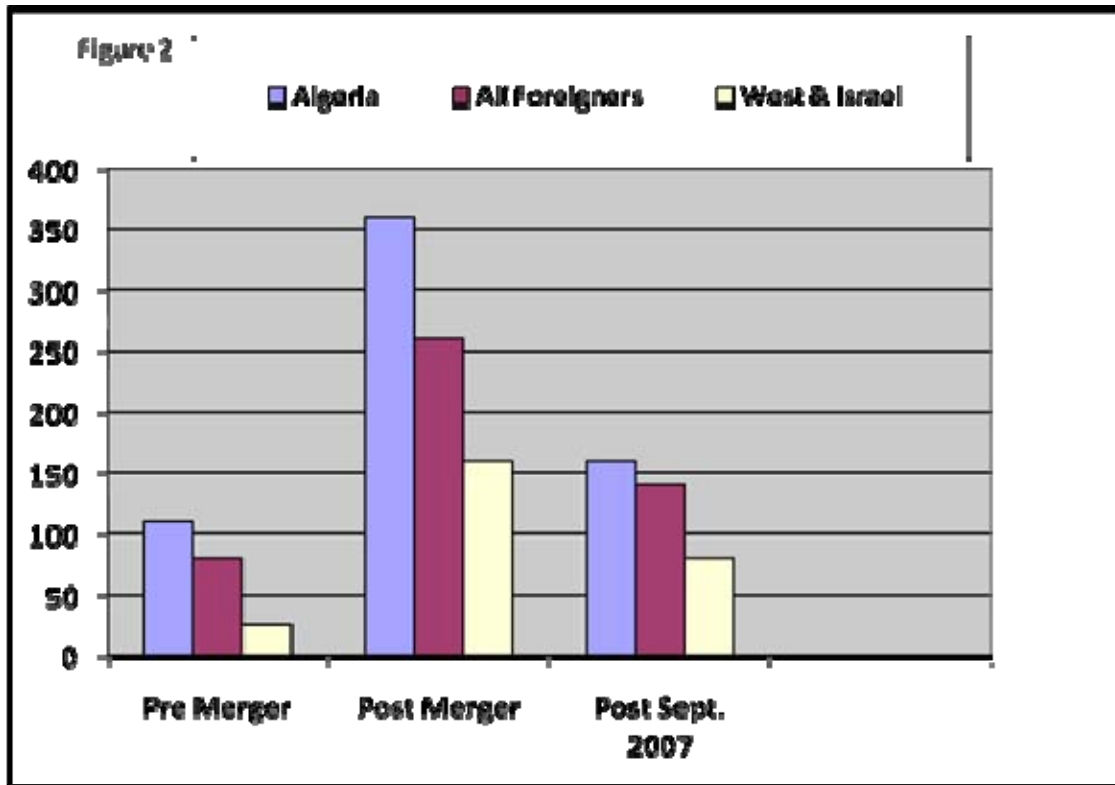


Figure 2. AQIM's Rhetoric from March 2005 through March 2008

c. *Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)*

The Yemeni government, like many other Arab regimes, supported the mujahidin in Afghanistan. However, their motives were different. They wanted to undermine the active communist party in the southern part of their own country. They believed the southern government was receiving support from the Soviets and might be able to maintain independence and threaten the unification project. Shaul Shay and Rachel Liberman argue that during the Afghan war, 30,000 Yemeni fighters participated in the war against the communists.<sup>164</sup> Most of them returned home after the Soviet withdrawal to fight the communists in the southern part of Yemen.

In the early 1990s, events escalated in the Gulf when the United States deployed a half million American soldiers to expel Saddam's forces from Kuwait. At the same time, the Saudi House rejected Bin Laden's proposal to use al-mujahedeen to fight

<sup>164</sup> Shaul Shay and Rachel Liberman, *the Red Sea Terror Triangle: Sudan, Somalia, Yemen, and Islamic Terror*, (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2005), 114.

Saddam and invited U.S. troops to the holy lands. The Yemeni government, contrary to most Arab leaders, supported Iraq and opposed the war. Saudi Arabia, in return, kicked out thousands of its Yemeni emigrants, and other Gulf countries did the same.

As a result, the Yemeni perceived the United States as an enemy. Consequently, Yemeni jihadists with close ties with Bin Laden plotted several attacks against American targets and hoped to force the Americans to leave the Arabian Peninsula. Their first anti-American attack, they bombed hotel in Aden where American soldiers stay on their way to Somalia. Then the Yemeni jihadists plotted to shoot down American military planes at Aden airport. However, with the unification of Yemen in 1994, President Abdullah Saleh neutralized those fighters by offering them military ranks and other endowments.

Some Jihadist groups, including the Islamic Army of Aden and Islamic Jihad of Yemen, continued to plot against American interests through the 1990s. In 1998, they kidnapped two Americans who were among 14 British and Australian tourists in Yemen. The operation that freed the hostages killed three British citizens and one Australian and wounded one American and three other tourists. In 2000, the jihadist groups, under the direct supervision of Bin Laden, succeeded in attacking the American destroyer, USS Cole, with an explosive laden fishing boat. The attack killed 17 American sailors and the two perpetrators. Another attack against American targets occurred when a militant entered a hospital and killed three American doctors.

After the 9/11 attack, the Yemeni government feared American retaliation; hence, it showed its full readiness to cooperate with the U.S. administration in the global war on terrorism. To show its commitment to the U.S. administration, the Yemeni government launched major crackdowns against jihadist groups hiding in the self-governed tribal areas. In 2002, after an extensive intelligence operation and an interchange between the Yemenis and their counterparts at the American embassy, an American drone strike killed Abu Ali al Harthi, the leader of al-Qaeda in Yemen. Throughout 2003, Yemen's counter-terrorism forces captured 92 high-value targets,

among them al-Harithi's successor, Muhammad Hamdi al-Ahdal who they captured on November 25, 2003.<sup>165</sup> This success led to the general dissolution of terrorists groups in Yemen.

In 2003, the United States invaded Iraq, accusing them of building a weapon of mass destruction and maintaining ties with al-Qaeda. The U.S Administration failed to convince Muslim nations that their cause was valid. U.S. policy concerning Iraq was a double-edged sword relative to the Yemeni terrorists. First, they perceived the war as a direct conquest in the Muslim world. Hence, the invasion sparked wave of hatred against U.S policy in Iraq. Second, it distracted the U.S. administration, as well as the Yemeni government, from the mission to eliminate terrorism in the country. The U.S. policy shift included the suspension of Yemen from the USAID program as part of its anti-corruption campaign.<sup>166</sup> These measures constrained the government's ability to fight terrorism and to provide necessary services for its citizens.

Under these circumstances, the new form of al-Qaeda emerged. In 2006, al-Wahayshi, his prison-mate Qasim al-Raymi, and 23 other fugitives escaped from prison. Al-Wahayshi, a former Bin Laden assistant, assumed leadership of the group, and soon he started to launch successful attacks against western targets. Two years after the escape, the group published its first publication under the name of *Sada al-Malahem*. In the editorial, the group announced that the publication emerged as a response to al-Zawahiri's call. In their third publication, the group warned western individuals to leave the peninsula. According to the editorial, the group promised to carry on al-Zarqawi's policy and intended to behead the [infidels].<sup>167</sup> In 2008, the group plotted several mortar attacks against the American embassy. The most significant attack was in September 2008, when two suicide cars and four suicide individuals breached the embassy.

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<sup>165</sup> Michael Knights, "Jihadist Paradise – Yemen's Terrorist Threat Re-emerges," *Jane's Intelligence Review*, May15, 2008.

<sup>166</sup> Gregory Johnsen, "Al-Qaeda in Yemen," (Speaker at event at Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Washington, D.C.*, 07 July 2009, <http://carnegieendowment.org/files/0708carnegie-yemen.pdf>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>167</sup> Sada al-al-Almalahem, "editorial," Issue No. 3, *Pulpit of Monotheism and Jihad*, 2008, <http://www.tawhed.ws/c?i=340>, (accessed November 4, 2010).

Although the attack failed, it killed seventeen people including one American woman. The group had issued an announcement indicating that the operation was a response to Bin Laden's call.

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) emerged in the beginning of 2009 as coalition between the al-Qaeda cells in Yemen and Saudi Arabia. Many believe that the new organization comprises several hundred operatives supported and protected by the eastern province tribes. Although al-Wahayshi, the leader of the AQAP, emphasizes the importance of fighting the near enemy, he believes that it is also necessary to attack the interests of Israel, the United States and Europe in the Arabian Peninsula. "Ali al-Ahmed, director of the Institute for Gulf Affairs in Washington, said, 'Yemen had become the third-largest haven for al-Qaeda, and the group there is perhaps the most stable when compared to units operating in Iraq, North Africa and South Asia'."<sup>168</sup> Recently the Christmas Day bombing attempt on Northwest Flight 253 from Amsterdam to Detroit highlighted the capability of the AQAP to target American interests. The group's determination to target American interests after the Christmas plot is evident in their attempt to ship three remote bombs on cargo planes from Yemen to the United States of America. Figure 3 illustrates the increasing rate of fatalities and casualties since the group has adopted al-Qaeda's tactics and commands.

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<sup>168</sup> Al Jazeera and agencies, "Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula Saudi and Yemeni Fighters Merged their Units in January 2009," *Al Jazeera.net*, December 29, 2009, <http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2009/12/2009122935812371810.html>, (accessed december1, 2010).

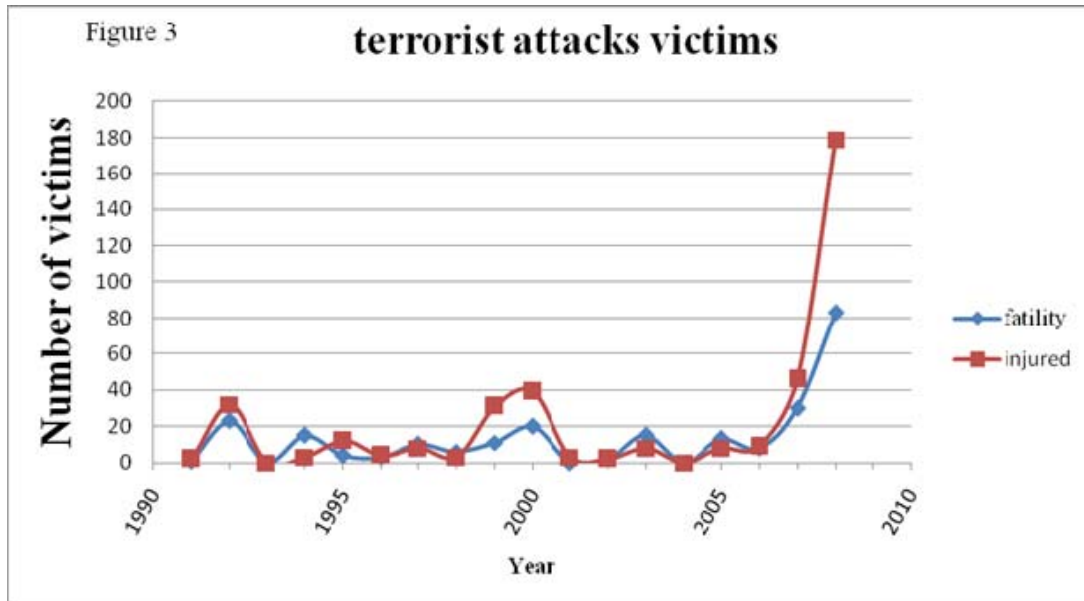


Figure 3. Numbers of Casualties and Fatalities of Terrorism Attacks in Yemen<sup>169</sup>

## 2. Al-Qaeda Affiliates

Al-Qaeda affiliates are the second-highest form of connection to the terrorist network. Affiliates include those organizations and terrorist groups that maintain a good relationship with al-Qaeda but remain independent of it. These groups are currently enjoying or have enjoyed Bin Laden's support. "Some affiliates receive money, training, and weapons; others look to the core leadership in Pakistan for strategic guidance, theological justification, and a larger narrative of global struggle."<sup>170</sup> Although these organizations focus mainly on internal struggles; that is, they want to establish Islamic states in their respective nations, they look at Bin Laden as a legitimate defendant of *al-Ummah* and a supporter of their causes.

Bin Laden fostered his connections with these groups and organizations to achieve several goals. First, he wanted to persuade them to shift their focus from fighting their local regimes (near enemy) to fighting the far enemy. Second, he wanted make sure

<sup>169</sup> Global Terrorism Database, "Yemen," <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>, (accessed October 20, 2010).

<sup>170</sup> Rollins, "Al Qaeda and Affiliates."

these organizations would offer his operators any logistical resources they needed to facilitate attacks. This support could include the provision of safe houses, fraudulent documents, target information, and equipment.

Bin Laden maintained good relationships with most of the active terrorist groups around the world. Intelligence claims that Bin Laden retains relations with 23 terrorist groups.<sup>171</sup> “According to U.S. officials, Al Qaeda cells and associates are located in over 70 countries.”<sup>172</sup> Although studying the details of al-Qaeda’s affiliates is beyond the scope of this research, this thesis will briefly examine Bin Laden’s affiliation with the Somalia Islamist group, Al Ittihad Al Islami (AIAI).

*a. Al Ittihad Al Islami, IUC, and al-Shabaab al-Mujahedeen in Somalia*

In 1991, the Somali government collapsed and the country fell into turmoil. Al-Ittihad Al Islami, established in the mid 1980s, seized this opportunity, along with the Islamic Courts, to present itself as a political power that sought to restore order in the country. After Barrie’s communist regime fell, Bin Laden, who stationed in Sudan, sought to support Al-Ittihad’s efforts to establish an Islamic estate in Somalia. The collapse of Barrie’s regime sparked a civil war among different warlords on one side and different Islamic groups on the other side. The war displaced thousands and killed thousands more. The anarchic political environment, coupled with poverty and drought, led to a half million deaths in the early 1990s.

In 1993, the American military intervened in Somalia to protect the United Nations humanitarian mission. However, Islamists and Bin Laden perceived the intervention as a direct threat to the Islamic project in Somalia and in Sudan. Therefore, between 1992 and 1993, Bin Laden sent his military advisor Mohammad Atef to train Islamist fighters on explosives and Guerrilla tactics so they could fight the U.S. military in Somalia. Allegedly, those trainees were the key fighters who killed eighteen U.S. marines in 1993. “Some analysts believe Bin Laden devoted up to \$3 million towards the

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<sup>171</sup> Global Security, “Al-Qaida / Al-Qaeda (the Base),” [Globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-qaida.htm)  
<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/para/al-qaida.htm>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>172</sup> Ibid.

establishment of an Islamic state administered by al-Ittihad al-Islami.”<sup>173</sup> According to a CNN report, when they interviewed Bin Laden in 1997, he admitted that his followers, along with the local jihadists, had killed the 18 marines.<sup>174</sup>

Contrary to this argument, others believe that the Somali response to al-Qaeda intervention was largely negative. According to Bin Laden’s former bodyguard, Abu Jandal, who went to Somalia for jihad, the Somalis gave him a hard time when they asked him if he belonged to al-Qaeda. Abu Jandal argues that al-Qaeda was not been welcomed by the Somalis. Therefore, they left the country after the U.S. withdrawal.<sup>175</sup> Tribal influence over the Islamists groups contributed to the limited existence of foreign fighters among the Somalis factions. It seems that Bin Laden’s connections were limited to an individual level, especially his connection to Muhammad Farrah Aidid, who fought against the United States intervention.

The 9/11 attack brought Africa in general and Somalia in particular under U.S. scrutiny awareness again. Concerns arose about the possibility of Bin Laden’s exploitation of the Somali issue. The U.S administration feared that Somalia, a failed state with an Islamic government in control, would provide a safe haven to al-Qaeda, as the Taliban did. Therefore, in an effort to oust the ICU, the administration formed an opposition party composed of several secular warlords called the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counterterrorism (ARPC). In mid 2006, the ARPC clashed with the ICU in Mogadishu in a bloody confrontation; however, the ICU resolved the battle to its advantage.

By June 2006, the Islamic Court Union succeeded in controlling the capital and most of the county regions after defeating the (ARPC). The (ICU) - (ARPC) war exposed the U.S. and Ethiopian intentions to overthrow the Islamists in Somalia. As a result, it raised anti-American and anti-Ethiopian sentiments. Additionally, the (ICU)

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<sup>173</sup> Combating Terrorism Center, “Somalia's al-Ittihad al-Islami (AIAI; Islamic Union),” *West Point*, <http://www.ctc.usma.edu/aq/pdf/AIAI.pdf>, (accessed december2, 2010).

<sup>174</sup> Nancy Peckenham and others, “Bin Laden, Millionaire with a Dangerous Grudge,” *CNN.Com*, September 27, 2001, <http://archives.cnn.com/2001/US/09/12/binladen.profile/index.html> (accessed November 7, 2010).

<sup>175</sup> Al-Hamadi, “Inside al-Qaeda.”

realized the urgent need for unity among different groups for preparedness and armament acquisition. Accordingly, it embraced the al-Ittihad group and other Islamist factions and established its own military wing, which later became the Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahedeen. Although the (ICU) applied a strict code of Sharia'h law in the country, it had significant achievements in both security and the services it provided. They reopened the country's sea and airports that had been closed for 15 years. They launched harsh crackdowns against warlords and pirates. Additionally, the ICU earned the credit for ending the civil war. It was the first relative peace in Somalia since the collapse of Barrie regime. These measures increased the popularity of the ICU, and consequently, legitimized it domestically and regionally.

In late 2006, the United States provided air support to the Ethiopian military forces that swept Somalia and ousted the IUC. In the aftermath of the invasion, the country fell again into a Quasi-Civil War between the Islamists and the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) supported by the Ethiopian forces. The United States' support of the invasion contributed y to the increase of terrorism in Somalia and fostered the Somali terrorists' relations with Global-jihadists. First, it undermined a strong political and legitimate party and replaced it with a weak entity that had no legitimacy. Second, the Somalis perceived the U.S intervention as a direct support of a Christian state against a Muslim one. This fostered Bin Laden's narration that the War on Terrorism was a manifestation of the [crusades] third, "The ouster from power of the ICU by Ethiopian forces in December 2006 created a security vacuum that was soon occupied by the more radical elements of the ICU's military factions."<sup>176</sup> Soon after the invasion, some hardliners split from the relatively moderate ICU and formed a new group called Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahedeen or al-Shabaab.

Before the invasion, there were plethora reports that indicated a limited existence of al-Qaeda in Somalia. Their numbers, if any, did not exceed a half dozen. However, after the 2006 invasion, the Somali Islamists called for foreigner-jihadist support. On December 23, Yusuf Mohammed appealed to Muslim jihadists for the first

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<sup>176</sup> Ted Dagne, "Somalia: Current Conditions and Prospects for a Lasting Peace," *Congressional Research Center*, October 8, 2010), 10.

time. He said, "We're saying our country is open to Muslims worldwide. Let them fight in Somalia and wage jihad, and God willing, attack Addis Ababa.... We want anyone who can help remove the enemy to come in."<sup>177</sup> Within days of Yusuf's call, the Islamic website, al-Sahab, released an audio message from al-Zawahiri to all Muslims. He urged them to support the Somali jihadists in their fight against the Ethiopians. He said; "I am here calling upon the Muslim Ummah in Somalia to resist in this new battlefield of the Crusaders' war, which is launched by America, its allies, and the United Nations against Islam and Muslims."<sup>178</sup> Additionally, he encouraged the jihadists to employ al-Qaeda tactics when he said, "You have to use ambushes and mines, and raids and suicidal attacks".<sup>179</sup>

Foreign fighters started to infiltrate the country to fight alongside al-Shabaab against the TFG and the Ethiopians. In 2009, the estimated number to foreign fighters in Somalia, according to Somali officials and African Union sources, was about 400.<sup>180</sup> The war approach in Somalia, as well as in Iraq, came to serve Bin Laden and helped him achieve what he could not during the 1990s. In 2009, the leadership of al-Shabaab pledged alliance with Bin Laden in a videotaped message titled, Labaik ya Osama (At your service, Osama). The convergence of al-Qaeda and al-Shabaab gave the latter significant legitimacy; therefore, it enhanced al-Shabaab capabilities to attract more recruits, even from Somali Diasporas. Scott Mulligan argues, "Law enforcement [in the United States] has speculated that the 20 [Somalis] left the United States in order to train and fight in Somalia's on-going civil war or to train for terrorist operations."<sup>181</sup> The

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<sup>177</sup> Jeffrey Gettleman, "Islamic Forces Expand Attacks and Urge Muslims to Join War on Somalian Government," *the New York Times*, December 24, 2006, <http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9B03EED61131F937A15751C1A9609C8B63>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>178</sup> SITE Institute, "Audio Message from Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri Issued by as-Sahab Addressed to Muslims: "Set Out and Support Your Brothers in Somalia," Washington, DC: counterterrorismblog.org, <http://counterterrorismblog.org/site-resources/images/SITE%20Institute%20-%201-4-07%20-%20Zawahiri%20Audio%20Support%20Somali%20Brothers.pdf>, (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Dagne, "Somalia, Current Conditions," 12.

<sup>181</sup> Scott Mulligan, *Radicalization within the Somali-American diaspora*, (California: Naval Postgraduate School, 2009), 4.

ability of al-Shabaab to recruit individuals from the United States and Europe increased the possibility of al-Qaeda using those individuals to carry out terrorist operations in the United States.

### **3. Al-Qaeda Aspirants**

Al-Qaeda aspirants are those with the weakest connection to the al-Qaeda network, but they represent a phenomenon that measures the appeal of the al-Qaeda brand. Al-Qaeda aspirants exist on two levels: groups or individuals. They pose a greater threat to counterterrorism than affiliates and mergers, because they are hard to detect, monitor, and disrupt. The number of groups and individuals aspiring to be part of al-Qaeda's global movement is a strong indication that Bin Laden is winning over the mind and hearts of the Muslim audience. It also indicates that the United States is falling behind on this front. Sympathy for Bin Laden is evident in a 2004 opinion poll. In this poll, 65 percent of the Arab populace admired Osama Bin Laden and only 7 percent admired President Bush.<sup>182</sup> The U.S policy to fight al-Qaeda and the invasion of two Muslim countries are two factors that contribute to the U.S. losing at the fronts of the "war of idea".

One of the most important forms of al-Qaeda aspirants are "homegrown" radicals in western countries. Within 10 years of 9/11, there were about 40 terrorist plots in the United States perpetrated by U.S. citizens. Half of them were converters to Islam, inspired by al-Qaeda, but not directly associated with it.<sup>183</sup> Scenes of war on television and in internet forums showing the bloodshed of thousands of innocent people in the Muslim world have become al-Qaeda recruitment posters. The ideas of a defensive war and compulsory jihad are spurring individuals, cells, and groups step up to help their Muslims [brothers] in other countries.

Such entities are capable of following Bin Laden's broad orders, directions, and theological guidance through internet chat rooms and his periodically released

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<sup>182</sup> John V. Parachini, *Combating Terrorism: the 9/11 Commission Recommendations and the National Strategies*, (RAND Corporation: September 2004), 9.

<sup>183</sup> Jerome Bjelopera and Mark Randol, "American Jihadist Terrorism: Combating a Complex Threat," *Congressional research services*, September 20, 2010, 1.

videotapes. They do not the core organization's finances or detailed plans. Marc Sageman argues that 78 percent of all terrorist plots between 2004 and 2009 in the West were a product of "autonomous homegrown" cells "without any connection, direction, or control from al-Qaeda's core or its allies."<sup>184</sup> Among the 40 plots after 9/11, four resulted in attacks. The Fort Hood attack, carried out by Army Major Nedal Hassan, constitutes the most tragic one. In November 5, 2009, Major Nedal opened fire with his two pistols against fellow U.S. soldiers. He killed 13 and injured about 40 others.

Another form of al-Qaeda aspirant is those who look to al-Qaeda as a perfect example in terms of structure, theology, and goals. Therefore, they seek to mimic al-Qaeda's tactics and draw inspiration from its leadership. In 2006, such group had emerged in Lebanon under the name of Fateh al-Islam. The group's goal, specified by its leader Shakir al-Abasi, was to fight the Jews, the Americans, and their loyalists.<sup>185</sup> According to al-Abasi, although his group was independent from al-Qaeda, he had no reservations about supporting its cause. A similar situation occurred in Jordan. In 2006, the Jordanian government dealt with 10 different cells. Each had no direct connection with al-Qaeda, but they were carrying its ideology. Therefore, the homegrown radicals add a new dimension to al-Qaeda's organizational structure. Apparently, the perception of the war on contributes to the emergence of such groups. According to Rick Nelson and Ben Bodurian, the perception of U.S. military operations in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia, and other Muslim countries as a war on Islam and its adherents is the common theme that spurs individuals to radicalization.<sup>186</sup>

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<sup>184</sup> Marc Sageman, "Confronting al-Qaeda: Understanding the Threat in Afghanistan," *Perspective on Terrorism* Volume III, Issue No. 4.  
[http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php?option=com\\_rokzine&view=article&id=92&Itemid=54](http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php?option=com_rokzine&view=article&id=92&Itemid=54), (accessed December 1, 2010).

<sup>185</sup> Al Jazeera and agencies, "Gun Battle Resumes in Lebanon As More US Military Aid Arrives, Leader of Fatah al-Islam Vows to Keep Fighting," Al Jazeera.net, May 27, 2007,  
<http://english.aljazeera.net/news/middleeast/2007/05/2008525143551327280.html>, (accessed december 1, 2010).

<sup>186</sup> Rick Nelson and Ben Bodurian, "A Growing Terrorist Threat? Assessing "Homegrown" Extremism in the United States," 3, *Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS)*, March 2010.

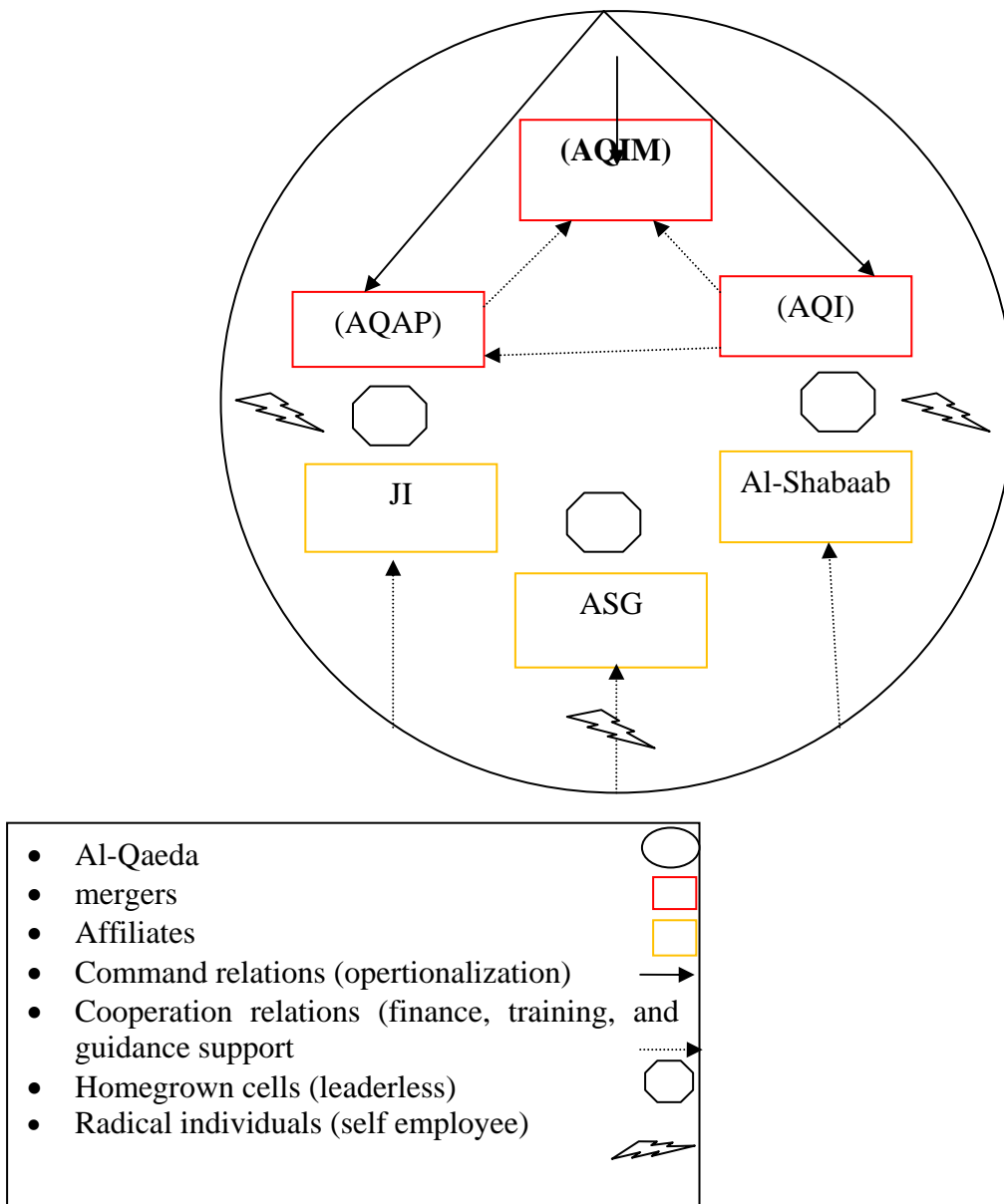


Figure 4. Al-Qaeda Organizational Structure Presently

## **V. CONCLUSION**

### **A. SUMMARY**

In the wake of the tragic 9/11 attack, the U.S. administration chose military might to respond to al-Qaeda. Consequently, voices that suggested dealing with al-Qaeda from a criminology perspective fell on deaf ears. Likewise, voices that called for rooting out the cause behind terrorism, instead of dealing with its symptoms, also went unheard by a U.S. public seeking retaliatory attacks. The Bush administration promised to eliminate not only al-Qaeda, but also every terrorist group around the globe. This thesis examined the effect of this approach, utilizing U.S. military might to combat al-Qaeda and its peripheral organizations, on al-Qaeda organizational structure.

After nine years of utilizing U.S. military might to combat al-Qaeda, it is important to examine its effectiveness on eliminating adversaries. Additionally, the implications of this war approach in terms of its economic, human, and social costs underscore this importance. In terms of financial costs, operations related to the war on terrorism cost \$1.121 trillion from 9/11 through 2010. Analysts expect this number to reach \$1.5 trillion in 2012. In terms of human cost, the war has killed almost one million people, injured about 1.8 million others, and displaced eight to 10 million. Despite these facts, the U.S. administration, policymakers, and media rely in on body count metrics to determine the success of the war approach. They measure this success in the death of two-thirds of al-Qaeda's operatives, capture of several hundred terrorists, freeze of \$200 million of al-Qaeda's financial assets, and the denial of a safe haven to al-Qaeda. However, reality suggests al-Qaeda is now stronger than it was before 9/11, and it still poses an imminent threat to the west in general and to the United States in particular, which is evident in the increasing rate of its attacks post-9/11 (Figure 5).

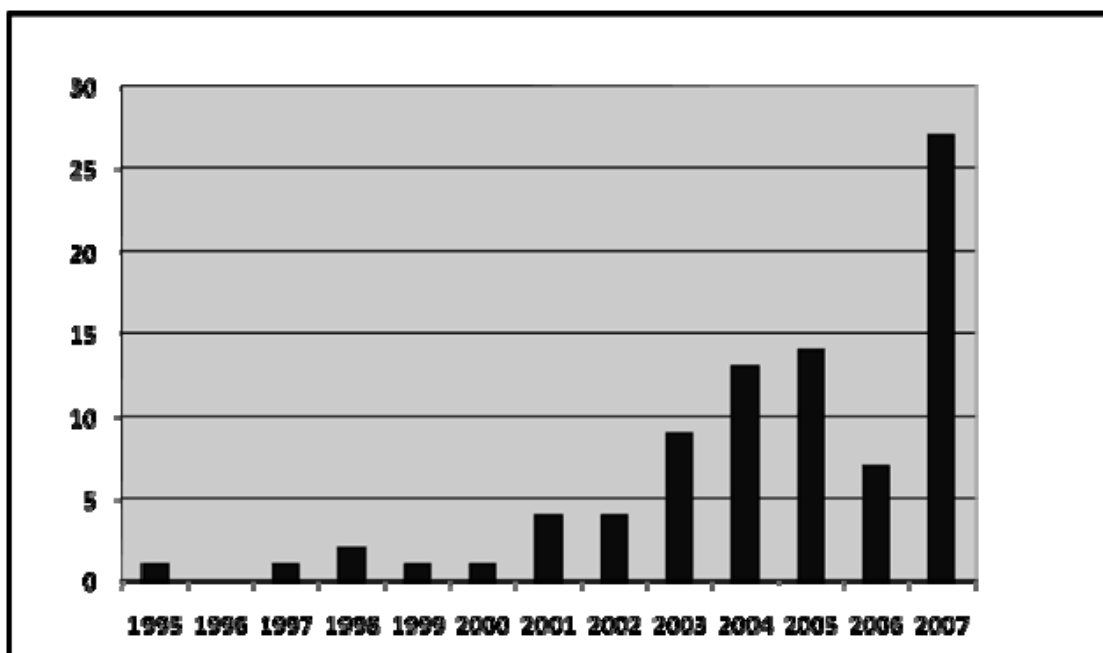


Figure 5. Al Qaeda Attacks, 1995–2007 (Excluding Iraq and Afghanistan)<sup>187</sup>

The paradox between the logic and reality of al-Qaeda is a product of using the wrong metrics to examine the effectiveness of the war approach. Thus, this research uses the organizational structure metrics, instead the body count ones. The main argument of this thesis is that while the war approach affected the organizational structure of al-Qaeda, it did so to the organization's advantage. The war approach has changed al-Qaeda from an isolated, limited, and hierarchal organization into a global ideological movement.

Qualitative analyses of al-Qaeda history and a cross-time comparison between al-Qaeda pre-9/11 and al-Qaeda post-9/11 foster this argument. The research covers three main periods in al-Qaeda history: the organization's establishment era, the period that extend from 1998 when Bin Laden declared the war against the west until the U.S. administration declared the war on terrorism, and post-9/11. Additionally, the research focuses on analyzing al-Qaeda's organizational structure, goals and its relations with other contemporary groups over these three periods. Along with the history of al-Qaeda, the research also examines the history of the main jihadist groups that were operating

<sup>187</sup> Seth G. Jones, *How Terrorist Groups end: Lessons for Countering Al Qa'ida*, (RAND Corporation, 2008), 111.

during the late 1980s; the Egyptian jihadist groups (al-Islamiyah and al-jihad), the Libyan Islamic fighting group, and the Islamic armed group in Algeria. There were several reasons to look at these particular groups. First, the Egyptian groups, especially by who associated themselves with al-jihad groups like al-Zawahiri, contributed to the establishment of what is now al-Qaeda. Second, groups in Libya and Algeria ones came into being around the same time as al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda formed in the late 1980s; the LIFG formed in 1991–1992, and the GIA formed in 1991. Third, these groups all fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet Army, but they still preserved their distinct identities, different goals and different ideological currents. Fourth, after the U.S. responded militarily to the 9/11 attack, most of these groups merged under the banner of al-Qaeda, either at the individual or organization level.

## **B. FINDINGS**

First, using military force to combat al-Qaeda has proven to be counterproductive. The total war approach came to serve Bin Laden more than it hurt him, as it fostered his organization's structure horizontally. The present organization encompasses mergers, affiliates, aspirants, and radicalized individuals. The organization has diffused into groups and cells that operate in more than 70 countries around the world. Before, it was a single isolated and vertically structured organization. The war on terrorism changed the structure of al-Qaeda and made it more sophisticated and resilient. Al-Qaeda, like most other terrorist organizations, established itself with a classical organizational structure, as a top-down hierarchical organization with Bin Laden at its top as a controller. However, after 9/11, Bin Laden became more of a symbolic figure than a leader. As a direct response to the war approach, the structure of this organization flipped and became a bottom-up movement. Members are voluntarily defending the ideas behind al-Qaeda, but not al-Qaeda itself. Therefore, the killing or capturing of al-Qaeda operatives is not necessarily a good indication of the effectiveness of the war on terrorism.

Second, not all terrorists are al-Qaeda. Before the war on terrorism, al-Qaeda was an isolated group in Afghanistan. Like any other terrorist groups in the Islamic world, it was not free from internal and external rivalry. The portrayal of al-Qaeda and other

jihadists as one cohesive threat is a misguided conception. The jihadist organizations that were active in the Muslim world before 9/11 had two common characteristics. First, they limited their goals to fight the “corrupted regimes” or “the near enemy”. Second, the jihadist groups could not sustain their activities. They failed for several reasons including: difficulty with recruitment an inability to legitimize their actions, and lack of coordination and rivalry within the jihadist community due to different ideological lines. However, the war approach unleashed Islamic anger and contributed to the ease of its mobilization, thus it increased opportunities for al-Qaeda recruitment. It helped al-Qaeda legitimize terrorist actions, because they shifted the focus of the terror from apostate Muslims to the infidels who occupied Muslim lands. Most importantly, the metaphoric “war” solidified the concept of defensive jihad, which includes the compulsory responsibility of each Muslim to be part of this defensive war. Consequently, it dragged all terrorist groups out of their national spheres to fight a global war.

Third, the war approach is undermined all efforts to win over Muslim hearts and minds. Al-Qaeda is no longer just an organization. Thanks to the war on terrorism, it has grown into movement commanded by ideology, philosophy, and ideas that revolve around Islam and Muslims as the real target of the war on terrorism. Bullets and B52’s cannot battle such ideas. On the contrary, the excessive usage of military means leads to a great number of killings and does not discriminate between innocent civilians and terrorists. This provides no chance to win the war against al-Qaeda. The U.S. has lost the “war of idea” on all fronts. This is apparent in the way that people see Bin Laden and how they perceive the west in general and the United States in particular. According to a 2007 opinion poll taken in four Muslim countries (morocco, Pakistan, Egypt, and Indonesia), an average of 34 percent of respondents perceived that the goal of the war on terrorism was to weaken and divide Islam. In addition, 36 percent felt the aim was to achieve political and military domination and control the Middle East. Only 16 percent

viewed the U.S. war on terrorism as an act of protection from terrorist attacks. Additionally, on average, 19 percent had negative feelings about Bin Laden and 69 percent agreed with his organization's goals.<sup>188</sup>

### C. RECOMMENDATIONS

The war approach has not solved the problem of terrorism. In fact, terrorism as a phenomenon will never be eliminated. There can be no single moment when the U.S. administration will declare the end of terrorism. Terrorism has existed for thousands of years, and it will remain until the Day of Judgment. The elimination of all terrorists as the primary goal of the war on terrorism is problematic, because such a goal is unrealistic and unachievable. Policies should focus on how to minimize its effects, how to make it less attractive to individuals, and how to live with it while preserving the fundamentals of democracy. The following recommendations are not silver bullets that will eliminate terrorism. However, segregation and the adoption of a hybrid approach are the keys to minimize terrorism and to bring it back to a national level.

As a starting point, two key steps can make these recommendations applicable and successful. First, the U.S. administration has to redefine terrorism and terrorists. There is no single satisfactory definition for the word terrorism. According to Laqueur, there are more than a hundred different definitions for terrorism.<sup>189</sup> The lack of international consensus about what constitutes terrorism makes the U.S. war on terrorism an example of political hypocrisy. The term becomes elastic, assigned to those who disagree with the U.S. policies or threaten its interests.

If terrorism has one clear definition and the U.S. administration wants to eliminate it altogether, one might ask, why U.S. B52s do not hover over Uganda to eliminate the Lord Resistance Army. This group has killed far more people in Africa many times more than al-Qaeda ever did. They have abducted 20,000 children for sex and military service,

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<sup>188</sup> Steven Kull and others, "Muslim Public Opinion on US Policy, Attacks on Civilians and al Qaeda," *World Public Opinion*, April 24, 2007, 6–16, <http://www.worldpublicopinion.org/pipa/articles/brmiddleeastnafrica/346.php>, (accessed November 16, 2010).

<sup>189</sup> Walter Laqueur, *the new Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

and they have displaced about two million people.<sup>190</sup> Additionally, like al-Qaeda, religious ideology drives the group. It is a transnational terrorist group operating in several African countries whose goal is the establishment of a Christian state based on the biblical 10 commitments. There are dozens of terrorist groups operating around the globe. Selectively using military force against Islamic groups, as to element every terrorist and not against others legitimizes the al-Qaeda's notion that the war is purely against Islam and Muslims.

Second, the administration has to admit that military force is not the right tool to eliminate terrorism. On the contrary, the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan and Iraq complicates the problem. U.S. military forces are skilled at fighting large regular armies, commanded by a state on battlefronts. However, they are not prepared to fight loosely organized criminals. The extensive use of military power affects civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq more than it affects terrorists. Accordingly, the massive killings produced by bombardments raise anti-America resentments and facilitate terrorism recruitment. Therefore, without building an internationally recognized definition of terrorism and admitting military force cannot solve the problem, the following recommendations will not work.

### **1. Segregation**

Terrorists are not all the same; therefore, putting all terrorists into one category complicates the problem. The U.S. administration should change its rhetoric from the "war on terrorism," at least, to the "war on al-Qaeda," although the word "War" is also problematic. The total war strategy against all Islamic terrorists has been counterproductive, as it led them to unify. Before 9/11, terrorist groups in the Islamic world were at odds with Bin Laden and his desire to fight the far enemy. However, after the U.S. declared a war on terrorism, an alliance among them served their best interests. Therefore, the U.S. policies should aim to make it better for those who are not-al-Qaeda to dissociate themselves from the group. One suggestion in this context is to rephrase

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<sup>190</sup> Robert G. Berschinski, *AFRICOM's Dilemma: The "Global War on Terrorism" "Capacity Building," Humanitarianism, and the Future of U.S. Security Policy in Africa* (United States: U.S. Army War College, 2007), 23.

President Bush's rhetoric from 'if you are not with us, you are with terrorists' to 'if you are not with al-Qaeda, we are not against you'. Such policies, if applied patiently with limited military operations, will isolate al-Qaeda from its affiliates, especially in North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, and Iraq.

Additionally, the U.S. administration should differentiate between al-Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and between al-Qaeda and the different nationalist-resistance movements in Iraq. The Taliban and Iraqi nationalist goals are totally different from al-Qaeda's. These movements seek to regain their lost power in their respective countries, while al-Qaeda seeks to establish a utopian theological state. Therefore, negotiating a political settlement with the Taliban and the Iraqi nationalists in their respective states will neutralize them and isolate al-Qaeda.

According to an analytical study that covers 648 terrorist groups from 1968 to 2006, Jones Seth, argues, "When terrorist group becomes involved in an insurgency, it does not end easily. Nearly 50 percent of the time, groups ended by negotiating a settlement with the government; 25 percent of the time, they achieved victory; and 19 percent of the time, military forces defeated them."<sup>191</sup> With that said, al-Qaeda, unlike the surveyed religious groups, has a greater chance to achieve victory. It is the most sophisticated organization ever, and it operates beyond a state borders. Therefore, political negotiations with other national resistance movements and the exclusion of the non-al-Qaeda terrorist groups from military operations are essential to eliminate al-Qaeda.

## **2. Hybrid Approach**

There is no single approach to eliminate al-Qaeda or solve the problem of terrorism. However, each organization should have a distinct set of policies that fit with its goals, ideology, motivations, and constituencies. In al-Qaeda's case, the U.S. administration should focus on the long-term policies oriented toward rooting out the ideas and causes behind Islamic extremism. The administration should also keep terrorism under the umbrella of criminology and handle perpetrators according to the

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<sup>191</sup> Seth, *How Terrorist Groups End*, 111.

legal system. In terms of a military approach, the U.S. administration should avoid the over usage of military power. Instead, it should utilize surgical military operations against very specific targets, which will minimize the possibility of civilian casualties.

**a.        *Root-Causes Approach***

Killing Bin Laden or other al-Qaeda operatives is not going to solve the problem of terrorism. Al-Qaeda has become more an idea than an organization, and the U.S. cannot confront this “idea” militarily. Therefore, the U.S. administration should reallocate its resources to destroy the idea behind terrorism, instead of spending its billions on pursuing, killing, or capturing individuals. The death of an individual can become the impetus for others to pick up a weapon and fight. The U.S. policies should not focus on killing hundreds of terrorists, while neglecting the millions of young Muslims who lean toward extremism as a reaction to biased American foreign policies.

In a nutshell, three main root-causes spur extremism in the Islamic world. First, biased American foreign policy regarding the Palestinian-Israeli conflict constitutes the cornerstone of Islamic frustration. An unwillingness to solve this conflict and push the peace process forward puts U.S. credibility on the line. Additionally, its unconditional financial and military support for Israel at the expense of the Palestinians fosters extremism and raises hatred against the United States. Therefore, the U.S. administration should seriously address this problem and show its willingness to solve this conflict with a “two states solution”.

Second, the extensive presence of the U.S. military forces in the Middle East, especially after the unjustified invasion of Iraq, has sparked waves of anti-American sentiments. As Secunda and Terence argue, “In seeking to sell a war against terrorism to the American people, the Bush administration seems to have sold Islamic Jihadism to entire Muslim World.”<sup>192</sup> Therefore, the U.S. administration should limit its military operations in the region to avoid the perceptions of political and military domination.

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<sup>192</sup> Eugene Secunda and Terence Moran, *Selling War to America: From the Spanish American War to the Global War on Terror*, (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2007), 176.

Third, the U.S. administration should promote democratization in the region, without undermining it. If the Islamic public chooses an Islamic government to represent them, the U.S. has to work with that government. The U.S. response to HAMAS implies that democracy is conditional. In other words, democracy does not apply to Islamic parties. The U.S. policy fails to reconcile the need for democracy in the Middle East and the fear of Islamic parties assuming power. The U.S. administration falls between the hammer and the anvil on this issue; that is, between their need for the regimes' support in the U.S. war on terrorism and the Islamists who opposed their military presence in the region. Yet, to improve its image in the Islamic world, the U.S. administration has to make this difficult choice. Accordingly, it has to build relations with whatever representatives the public elects, and view the relationships as a partnership

***b. Soft Power Approach***

Joseph Nye defines soft power as “the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion.”<sup>193</sup> The U.S. administration displayed a lack of appreciation for possible long-term advantages by ignoring the use of a soft power approach against terrorism. Apparently, this methodology seems paradoxical to military operational strategy. Therefore, it's not surprising that former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld did not know the meaning of this term. In 2003, he made no distinction between soft power and hard power, and he limited soft power's meaning to the role of diplomacy.<sup>194</sup>

Terrorism is a crime, and terrorists are criminals, therefore, police, intelligence agencies, and the court system are the main instruments for eliminating terrorism. Unlike the military approach, policing terrorism is more productive, because

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<sup>193</sup> Joseph Nye, *Soft power: the means to success in world politics* (the United States: PublicAffairsTM, 2004), X.

<sup>194</sup> In September 25, 2003 former secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld was asked about his perspective about the soft power and its role. He replayed “I don't know what it means”. The transcript of former Secretary Rumsfeld Remarks at the Eisenhower National Security Conference can be accessed at the U.S. Department of Defense website:  
<http://www.defense.gov/transcripts/transcript.aspx?transcriptid=3189>.

police operations guarantee both disruption of terrorists and public contentment. Using police and law-enforcement agencies to counter al-Qaeda does not allow for heroic narrations that attract Muslim youths. The idea of being holy warriors who fight against the crusades is a keystone of al-Qaeda's recruitment. Policing can stand against such recruitment propaganda, undermine al-Qaeda narration, and take the glory and the thrill out of terrorism.<sup>195</sup>

Al-Qaeda is a transitional and cross-border phenomena; it is an international problem, not just an American problem. Therefore, its solution should rely on conceptualization of the problem at the international level. Militarizing the international community against this phenomenon is almost impossible. Instead, the U.S. administration should advocate an international court system dedicated to terrorism. Such a policy would enhance international cooperation and build a consensus around the meaning of terrorism and the proper methods to counter it. Additionally, a response to terrorism at the international level will reduce anti-American resentment and undermine al-Qaeda's "crusade narrations".

### *c. Military Approach*

The use of military force to fight al-Qaeda should be limited to surgical operations conducted by vanguard units. Such units should be tasked to find, fix, and disrupt the terrorists' military capabilities, without the need for an excessive preliminary bombardment or the need to hold ground for long period. Units could coordinate these missions with host nations who understand the local language, as well as the cultural and religious implications of these operations. Forces should not measure success by the number of terrorists killed, but instead by how many civilians the operation has saved. The administration should consider a compensation program for those who lost relatives or belongings as consequence of military operations. Such policies carry a built-in message that Muslim public is not the enemy. This will undermine al-Qaeda claims that the west does not value the lives of Muslims.

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<sup>195</sup> Marc Sageman, *Leaderless Jihad: Terror Network in the Twenty-First Century*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2008), 151.

Al-Qaeda exists, for the most part, in the Islamic world. Therefore, approaching it with an Islamic perspective, either militarily or politically, will be more effective than the direct U.S. military intervention. However, the U.S. administration can provide countries' of the region funds, equipment, training, and intelligence.

Al-Qaeda, as a religious cult with a utopian goal, faced dissolution from within. The overreaction to the 9/11 atrocity, in terms of excessive usage of the U.S. military machines against Muslim countries, reversed al-Qaeda's impending failure. Before the war on terrorism, al-Qaeda was an isolated group in Afghanistan with limited number of members. Other jihadists groups in Afghanistan were at odds with Bin Laden and his organization. The U.S. total war approach against terrorism led other jihadists to fight with Bin Laden.

This research examined the effectiveness of the war on terrorism 9 years after its declaration. The organizational structure metrics offers a better understanding of to what extent the war achieved its goal to eliminate terrorism. The analysis determined that the war approach has fueled terrorism. It contributed to the horizontal expansion of al-Qaeda's organizational structure. Al-Qaeda's expansion and survival relies on the idea that Muslims are under a crusade attack. Apparently, until policy decisions invalidate this narration, victory will be hard to achieve.

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